THE EMERGING HINDUTVA FORCE

The Ascent of Hindu Nationalism

Prakash Louis

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INDIA: MANY RELIGIONS, MANY CULTURES BUT ONE SOCIAL EXISTENCE

For Chhedilal and Mohammed Matin, their friendship was more important than all the communal hatred their cities have witnessed in the past few years. Friends for more than 50 years, Chhedilal, a Hindu, lived in Ayodhya and Matin, a Muslim, in Faizabad. When the news of Matin's illness reached him on Friday, Chhedilal rushed to his house. But the old friend had already died, and at the sight of his friend's body an apparently shocked Chhedilal collapsed and died few hours later. At the Rakabganj crossing, the funeral processions of two friends met yesterday and the bodies were placed there for some time. Later, Matin's body was buried in a graveyard and Chhedilal's cremated at a burning ghat.

The Hindu, Monday, 14th April 1997.

Dedicated to innumerable ordinary women and men of India who strove to establish and uphold valiantly and with sensitivity the pluralistic, egalitarian and democratic State and Society.

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PREFACE

Hindu nationalism has been in existence under the banner of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Indian soil for the last seven decades. But in the last decade it has shown its evil designs in the most inhuman forms. With changing times, the RSS emerged not only as a single force but also as a unified entity under the guise of the Sangh Parivar (SP). The demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya and the communal riots that followed after that, the atrocities on the minorities, the coming to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Review of the Constitution, the drafting of the Constitution of Bharat by the Sangh Parivar, etc have posed serious threat to the society and nation. These major events have led to a crisis of confidence, crisis of country's integrity and unity and crisis of very quintessence of the state and society. They have also posed major challenge to the very existence of our past, present and future. At the background to all these is the last battle of the brahminical forces to maintain and continue their hegemony and monopoly over the citizens of this country, especially over the Dalits, Tribals, women and the most backward castes.

The questions that haunt concerned citizens of this society is that why have the forces of Hindu nationalism surged, all of a sudden in the last one decade? What direction is the country and state taking under the overt and covert manipulations of the Sangh Parivar? What has happened to all the great traditions of '*sarva dharma sambhava*' and the secular principles that the leaders of this country deliberated about for the last fifty years? When the principles of the Constitution have not been put into practice, what is the use of review of the Constitution? In this entire state of total darkness, depression and destruction what happens to the most disadvantaged population like the Dalits, the Tribals, the women and the children? Do they have a future within the societal and national structure? Is the ability to resist and revolt any form of discrimination, exploitation, and tyranny dying out from out society? If so, what holds good for our future? An answer to these questions has not been found yet, what is more, newer questions are being raised everyday.

It is in this background, this book 'The Emergence of Hindutva Force' is being presented to the readers so as to engage every one in a collective exercise of search for the root problems and the alternatives that need to be worked out. This book is intended to dispel some of the misconceptions about the Sangh Parivar and provide information about the Hindutva force and its various forms of mobilization, its innumerable organizations and finally its nefarious activities. It also identifies the real face behind the force named Hindutva.

By way of retrospect an attempt has been made to look at the present so as to draw lessons for the future. The "saffron wave" is not today's phenomenon. Its foundation was laid during the freedom struggle. But in a period of societal and national crisis it has projected itself to be the defender of the nation state. Its hot pursuit of the so-called 'enemy' is an endeavour to gain credibility within the so-called majority and ultimately gain political mileage in a troubled scenario.

It is not this or that agenda as set by the saffron brigade that is the foundation of the Sangh Parivar. It is the ideology of 'Hindu nationalism' which has provided with it enough fodder for survival. In a country where the live issues of the masses have been shelved to the background, it is the creation of this myth of 'nationalisation of the masses' which has caught the imagination of many citizens. This process is all the more made easy by the creation of the 'other' as 'the enemy' and an absolute that is the cause of all the ills of our society and nation.

The Sangh Parivar's attempt to influence the minds of the future generation poses enormous threat to the future of the country itself. The saffron army seems to follow the old Chinese proverb, "If you are thinking one year ahead, plant rice; if you are thinking ten years ahead plant trees and if you are thinking hundred years ago educate the people". But their intention is not education of the citizens of this glorious country but manipulating the minds of the masses and the middle class so as to continue their hegemony and monopoly in all walks of life.

There are some inherent limitations of this study. The book has utilized extensively secondary data only. Given the nature of the emergence of Hindutva force, data from primary sources would have highlighted the manipulations that go on as well as it would have shown the level of intolerance it is creating among the citizens of our country. Incorporation of primary sources would have also exposed the real intent of the saffron brigade, under the guise of nation building. Another major shortcoming of this study is that it explores only the fundamentalism expressed in the form of Hindutva force that is operative within Hindu fold. A similar study of fundamentalism within Christianity and Islam also would reveal the real threat posed by fundamentalism in general.

Irrespective of the fact that this book has some limitations, an attempt has been made to collate various data about the genesis, evolution, the hidden and the real agenda of the Hindutva force. The first chapter introduces the theme and locates the ascent of the saffron wave in the background of fundamentalism, fascism, and differentiates Hindutva from Hinduism. The second chapter deals with the socio-cultural, economic and political factors behind the evolution of the Sangh Parivar. It also explores the historical conditions of modern India, which provided a rudimentary platform for the genesis, and the evolution of the saffron brigade. In the third chapter an attempt has been made to expose the hidden agenda of the Hindutva force. Though building and sustaining 'Nationalism' is presented as the agenda of the Sangh Parivar, in reality it is an endeavour to uphold and maintain the hegemony and the monopoly of the brahminical social order. In the ultimate analysis, it is a well thought out plan to eliminate the assertions that are erupting from the Dalits, the Tribals and women. The fourth chapter identifies the inter-link between the Sangh's policies and the liberalization process. The emergence of Bharatiya Janata Party as a political actor in the Indian national scene and the political manipulations of the Sangh behind the curtain are the focal point in the fifth chapter. The central point of the sixth chapter is the cultural distortions that are going on in the name of regaining the 'lost cultural glory'. In the seventh chapter an attempt has been made to present a case study of the 'Ayodhya Tangle' so as to examine the utilization of religion and politics in an attempt to ensure centre stage for the saffron forces. And finally, the last chapter identifies the various alternatives that need to be searched in nation and state building.

I have depended heavily on a number of persons, institutions and libraries for a complex study of this nature. I want to express my gratitude to Paul G. who encouraged me right through the project and provided me with all the material that he had. He also went through the manuscript and gave me valuable suggestions. My sincere thanks go to Dr. Fernando Franco for reading through the entire manuscript and for providing me with innumerable suggestions, corrections and additions. I express my thanks to Dr. R. M. Pal for reading the manuscript and suggesting valuable changes. I am deeply indebted to the secretarial staff of the Indian Social Institute, the librarian, the staff of the Documentation department for providing with all the material need for the completion of this book. My sincere thanks also go to my colleagues, the publication department of the Institute and the maintenance staff who gave me the necessary assistance to bring out this book in a short period of time. I owe my thanks to Dr. Ambrose Pinto, the Executive Director of the Indian Social Institute for suggesting corrections in the manuscript and for kindly publishing this book. To them and many others who encouraged me at every stage of the preparation of this book I owe my heartfelt thanks. None of them, however, is responsible for any error.

Religion and Politics are always interconnected. The phenomenon is more evident in developing societies where political units are generally not individual citizens but they are social groups and identities. This is seen in the rise in religio-centric politics. The process is epitomized by the rise of Hindu-chauvinistic BJP to the centre-stage and its subsequent forming a coalition government at the centre with itself as the dominant partner.

Partha Ghosh

Chapter I

Introduction

The ascent of religious fundamentalism as a powerful force and form has been witnessed in the world at large. The phenomenon of fundamentalism and the consequent crisis of identity and conflict it generates has posed challenges both in terms of understanding and evolving alternatives to counter these communal forces. But the complex form it can assume can be seen in the emergence of Hindutva force or the 'saffron wave' in India, the Islamization attempts in Pakistan, the Buddhist dominated Sinhalization in Sri Lanka and the Hinduization of Nepal. The unprecedented spread of this reality has threatened the very existence of minorities and the weaker sections and has endangered the very core of nationhood as well as the civil society.

The crucial matter is that through all these attempts a concerted effort is made by the dominant ruling caste, class, ethnic group and race to exercise total hegemony on the majority of powerless and exploited people. This is also an attempt to appropriate and enjoy all the resources of life. In this regard the support extended by the western countries to some of these Asian nation-states is to uphold the imperialist rule in a different garb. In a special way the bilateral relationship between the United States and India is a clear example of a big brother wanting to chastise the growing Muslim influence, and not out of any altruism towards India. Basically, it is also an enterprise to control the spread of Islam and to control the market. Hence, the slogan '*India-America bhai-bhai*' is only eyewash. Ultimately, the imperialist powers and the ruling class stand to benefit out of this bilateral relationship.

In simple terms Hindutva means Hinduism, that is the total aspect of 'Hinduness'. By constantly using this term Hindutva, the prophets of nationalism want to bring in an upsurge within the

Hindu majority who adhere to Hindu religious beliefs and practices. But this assertion is aimed at establishing a sense of *Hindu Rashtra* or *Bharatiyaness.* Through all these ploy the proponents of Hindu nationalism ultimately want to enhance their own power, privileges and positions. They do not want to adhere to the common concept, Hinduism, since an 'ism' can connote a set of beliefs, ideologies and strategies. By opting for the term Hindutva they want to appear to be free of 'isms' and the consequent debates. Moreover, the defenders of Hindutva focus on aspects like cultural, philosophical, racial, geographical unity of that population who are united by the bond of Hinduness. Hence, Hindutva refers to the traditions and heritage of all those who adhere to the various streams of Hinduism.

The dominant discourse of the Hindutva force is to reestablish the past glory, unity and integrity of Hinduism. But the Hinduism understood and practiced by the defenders of Hindutva is not that of the religiosity of the common masses who have lived their Hinduism in relation to believers of other religious traditions, in relation to nature, in relation to material and human resources. They lived their religious beliefs in consonance with the agricultural as well as with the ecological seasons. The so-called social scientists termed this form of living as 'little traditions'. But these were traditions that held the community living together and helped the social co-existence. These religious practices were not utilized as electoral plank but as a unifying force not only at the religious realm but also at the agricultural, collective and social domains. But these popular beliefs and practices are subsumed under the 'great traditions' of Ayodhya or under the Kashi, Mathura manipulations or under the raths and yatras.

Stated in another way Hindutva force is an attempt to enforce the upper caste hegemony and monopoly so as to continue to control the various basic resources of life and to maintain their dominance in general and Brahminical caste structure in particular. It is once again an attempt to arrest the assertions that are erupting unabated from the exploited oppressed and marginalized castes and communities. In social terms it is a systematic move to throttle the uprisings that are emerging at the present space and time of Indian society especially from that section of the society that is the Dalits, the Tribals, the most backward castes and the women of these sections. They are waking up from their slumber imposed upon them by the upper caste and class of Indian State and society and are demanding their legitimate place and role in the society.

In economic terms, the ascent of Hindutva force is the attempt to strangle the feeble efforts made by those who have for centuries been kept out of the ownership, control and usage of *jal*, *jungle* and *zamin*, that is, the material resources of human life. Above all it is an all out assault on the endeavour made by those who were reduced to a state of 'culture of silence' by those who wielded unlimited power through the means of 'culture of dominance'. Stated in another way the scheme behind the emergence of Hindutva force is to present the socio-political-economic ideology of 'status-quo' maintenance of the present unequal social, political and economic order under the garb of religious ideology especially in religious symbols and slogans.

G. Aloysius argues that communalism and communal nationalism is spreading to newer areas. He sees the communal nationalism in two senses: it is communal not only *vis-à-vis* other religious communities but equally so *vis-à-vis* the large masses of lower castes within the Hindu fold. It is therefore more appropriately termed as upper caste Brahminic nationalism. He also states that there are differences of opinion within the academic circle about using 'Brahminism' as an explanatory category in macro level political studies. But he also cautions that the term Brahminism refers not to the people who comprise the Brahmin community, but rather to the ideology of the Brahminic way of life.[1] Aloysius' caution has to be taken note of seriously, since there are many from the Brahmin community who are the principal critics and opponents of communalism, casteism, revivalism and fundamentalism.

Following in similar vein, Bruce Graham defines Brahminism as that system of religious beliefs and practices based on the ancient texts known as the Vedas and their associated literature. Traditionally, this literature was the preserve of the Brahman castes, transmitted for centuries by oral tradition. Dayanand Saraswati used the

Vedic texts to lay the foundations of the Arya Samaj movement. In course of time, the Hindu nationalist writers used the literature to create the commanding myths of cultural survival and revival with which they justified their political theories.[2] In course of time an ideology and programme around the concept 'Hindu Nation' was developed by the proponents of Hindu nationalism.

Thomas Hansen is of the view that Hindu nationalism is that ideology which attempts to transform Indian public culture into a sovereign, disciplined national culture rooted in what is claimed to be a superior ancient Hindu past, and to impose a corporatist and disciplined social and political organization upon society. This is based on the premise that the Indian nation can only be reinvigorated when its rightful proprietors, the Hindu majority, resurrect a strong sense of Hindutva, that is, Hinduness.[3] Hansen goes on to argue that the Hindutva force did not cut much ice with the lower rungs of the society. Instead, the xenophobic discourse of Hindu nationalism developed in the heart of the large and expanding middle class. It was mainly in these urban environments, rich in education, associational life, and civil engagement and social capital that the Hindu nationalist movement has found its most receptive audiences. Since the middle class which became the social base of the saffron upsurge was the one which often lost the sense of identity in the changing social and political scenario, it became easy for mobilising this unit into a potent force for defending the identity of the 'Hindu nation'.

In the entire socio-political processes, the vast majority of the masses were 'untouched' once again. But in the recent past, atrocities on the religious minorities, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes have been on the rise. There is direct link between increase in such atrocities and upward mobility within the lower stratum. Brahminic nationalism is a backlash against upward mobility. Caste as a weapon was used in anti-reservation riots against the lower castes and now religion is used to perpetrate atrocities and suppress minorities.[4] It is also significant to note this fundamental fact that a major segment of the minorities come from the Dalit, Tribal and the most backward communities. Once again a well-planned attempt is being made to isolate these social categories in the name of religious communities. It is this scheming to which attention be paid. In this regard it is expedient to comprehend the fundamental differences between Hinduism which is a religious phenomenon and Hindutva which is an attempt to use religion for economic, political and ideological purposes.

Hinduism

Hinduism is a very complex reality and hence it is difficult to define it. In common parlance the term Hinduism is defined as 'the religion of the Hindus'. But Hinduism is not one organized, monolithic religion. Neither is it made of one religious, cultural or spiritual stream. The very term "Hindu" from which "Hinduism" is derived and which was coined by Arabs and others was used to denote the people living on this side of Sindhu which is the Indus. To state in another way, the word is the Persian variant of Sanskrit *sindhu*, 'the Indus river' and in course of time came to refer to the population living in that region: the Indus people, the Indians. But the term at times also came to be used in a very broad sense of engulfing all the various streams of Indian religious beliefs and practices. At times it was also used in a restricted sense referring only to the upper caste brahminical cultural-religious order.[5]

The following three features were often presented as forming the 'essentials' or 'fundamentals' of Hinduism: 1) The recognition of the Vedas as beginningless and authoritative Holy scriptures; 2) the belief in reincarnation and the doctrine of karma, by which one's own acts determine one's next life; 3) the hierarchical social structure, the varna and caste system which was sanctioned by Brahminical *smrti* and seemed to dominate all walks of life. Yet none of these so-called fundamentals of Hinduism applies to all sections/religions in Hinduism. Major sections of the Buddhist world view and bhakti traditions have for many centuries, rejected the authority of the Vedas. Though caste system was very much an integral part of Hinduism, it was from the beginning bitterly opposed by many individuals and groups who were considered to be part of caste structure. At times another solution was given to escape this dilemma -- Hinduism is not a religion but 'a way of life'.

It can be stated that 'Hinduism is a geographically defined group of distinct but related religions, that originated in the same region, developed under similar socio-economic and political conditions, incorporated largely the same traditions, influenced each other continuously, and jointly contributed to the Hindu culture'.[6]

In the present context of the ascent of the Hindutva force, it is imperative that we try to understand the differences between Hinduism and Hindutva. Romila Thapar, in her analysis of the hindutva force argues that, "The new Hinduism which is being currently propagated by the Sanghs, Parishads and Samajs is an attempt to restructure the indigenous religion as a monolithic uniform religion, rather paralleling some of the features of Semitic religions. This seems to be a fundamental departure from the essentials of what may be called the indigenous 'Hindu' religions. Its form is not only in many ways alien to the earlier culture of India but equally disturbing is the uniformity which it seeks to impose on the variety of 'Hindu' religions".[7]

The table 1.1 tries to capture the similarities and the differences between Hinduism and the Hindutva force. A careful examination into the various aspects of Hinduism and Hindutva reveals that while Hinduism refers to the religious aspects of a segment of the Indian population, Hindutva on the other hand, focuses on the militant movements which tries to nationhood based on religious tenets. But these attempts of the '*Hindutvavadis*' are made on the background of the other segments of the population who do not adhere to those religious tenets. But it need to be immediately stated that there are many other common binding realities which have been the living force of this society and nation, India. In spite of or due to these unifying as well as the contrary aspects there have been a common co-existence for centuries.

Fundamentalism

In the academic circle, fundamentalism is understood as a belief in the timeless and universal nature and application of religious commandments. Interestingly, the term fundamentalism is a Christian concept. Hence, it talks about Islamic fundamentalism forgetting the fundamental tenets and operations that are inherently pervasive in

Table 1.1

Hinduism	Hindutva
1. A collation of multiple traditions: Brahminism-Shramanism Tantra, Kabir and Tukaram etc.	1. Politics of Hindu elite, drawing from Brahminical Hinduism.
2. Brahminism: Caste system, the Dominant ethos.	2. Brew of Brahminical Hinduism and Nationalism
3. Brahminism projected as the Hinduism initially in 6-10 century, then in early 19th century, Brahminical Hinduism projected to be synonymous with Hinduism.	3. Aims at Hindu Rashtra based on Brahminical Hinduism
4. Shramanic traditions: Constant rebellion: attempt to escape the clutches of Brahminism: Conversion to Buddhism (early times and now after the lead given by Ambedkar). Vivekananda said: Why amongst the poor are so many Mohammedans? It is to escape the tyranny of the Zamindar and the priests.	4. Led initially by Brahmins and Banias. Even now the dominant leadership is from the upper castes. Attempt is now being made to rope in leaders from the lower castes in political fronts but not in the RSS.
5. 'Dharma' is a mix of Humanism and caste based religious duties.	5. Political expression through sangh parivar now, earlier Hindu Mahasabha and RSS.
6. Semitisation process being spearheaded by SP Holy deity: Ram, Holy Book: Gita, clergy: Shankaracharyas etc.	6. A mix of fundamentalism and fascism
7. Its proponents claim it to be tolerant and catholic. For example in the past tolerant towards Shudras and now towards Muslims.	7. VHP brings in the stink of fundamentalism in the essentially fascist politics of RSS, BJP and Bajrangdal.

[Source: P.R. Ram. "Fascism of Sangh Parivar"]

Christianity. Islamic fundamentalism refers to the beliefs and behaviours of those who regard Islamic laws and values as the only legitimate principles for organizing Islamic societies and are willing to use any means, including violence, to achieve this goal.[8] Historically speaking, the term fundamentalism has essentially become synonymous with terrorism, anarchy and fanaticism. Many people view fundamentalism as purely a religious phenomenon. But historical records abound with this social fact that fundamentalism has been used as a weapon to achieve political and economic objectives. In the late 1970s, Ayatollah Khomeini effectively used religious symbolism for political mass mobilization that resulted in the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979.

But in reality one can not speak about Islamic fundamentalism in a summary manner. Even a cursory glance at the recent history of Kashmir, one becomes aware of the fact that the Kashmir militants who are supposed to represent the Islamic fundamentalism first came for Hindus, then for Sikhs, and now for the Shias who are a major segment among the Muslims. The warring factions within the Islamic religious community belies a single fundamentalistic trend. Thus the Islamic world itself is a divided one and not a neat communitarian identity can be assured. In the same vein it can be argued that all religions over the years have exhibited fundamentalistic tendencies.

Significantly, the term fundamentalism was first used in the early 1920s with reference to and among some conservative Protestant groups in America. In course of time, fundamentalism among various Christian and Jewish groups came to be associated with the key ideas of the inerrancy of the scriptures, the admissibility of its modernist interpretations, and the intolerance of dissent. So much so that by the 1970s the Oxford Biblical scholar James Barr was to pronounce fundamentalism a bad word, suggestive of 'narrowness, bigotry, obscurantism and sectarianism'.[9]

In terms of personal outlook, fundamentalism is characterized by a comprehensive and absolutist belief system capable of generating intense aspirations and total commitment to precepts. It involves a totalistic definition of reality in order to revitalize authentic values, usually by restoring the spirit and commitment of a past era. Such an all-encompassing outlook does not leave room for toleration of others. In principle fundamentalism is intrinsically undemocratic although it will, when convenient or necessary, use democracy to achieve its ends.[10] It is also significant that fundamentalism does not leave room for civil rights nor for human rights of anyone outside the community of the followers. This logic makes it morally possible for both the individuals and the collectivity which often takes the shape of a 'mob' to justify vandalism, destruction, murder, massacre and terrorism. In this regard facts are disregarded and 'fiction' which should be read as 'rumours fabricated' take the upper hand.

Bjorkman goes on to argue that in order to maintain coherence and momentum, fundamentalists require an enemy -- or rather two enemies: one within their ranks, the other outside. Since the internal enemy might betray the "cause", periodic purges and purifications of members become necessary, since the external enemy threatens to destroy the "cause", ranks must consolidate. Historically speaking, the fundamentalists more often are interested in ideological purity, racial superiority and preeminence of religious tenets than in winning elections or maintaining coalitions. It is not argued here that they do not take recourse to electoral politics or to political alliances. But these are only a mechanism to buy time for the greater onslaught in the form of ascendance of fundamentalistic forces. The Hindu Kingdom of Nepal appears to be following the path of liberal democracy, but in the final analysis secularism seems to be an insufficient basis for sustaining national identity in Nepal.

According to Kalim Bahadur, Islamic fundamentalism is not a clearly defined category of religio-political thought. It can be defined as a religio-political movement; it essentially means going back to the original sources and roots of Islam. It advocates adherence to the original beliefs of the religion in their literal interpretations as fundamental and basic principles, thus transcending all social, economic, political and cultural transformations which span a period of 14 centuries.[11] Fundamentalists are opposed to pluralistic politics. Since they believe that they are the true exponents of Islam and that any view different from that of theirs is un-Islamic, it should not be allowed to be expressed.

It is of seminal significance to underscore the point that the features of fundamentalism discussed here in view of Islam and Christianity can not be applied to Hinduism which is not based on a single book or a single lawgiver. But the existing socio-political context is important to comprehend the emergence of fundamentalist trends in Hinduism. Romesh Thapar argued that when confronted by the proselytising faiths of Islam and Christianity, Hindus panicked. At first they turned "inwards" by evolving endless private rituals then they turned "outwards" in aggressive self-assertion through public rituals and "in processions around this and that gods and goddess". B.G. Tilak's use of the Ganesh festival is an apt example of the reality under review.

Some other Hindu thinkers took recourse to the superiority of Hindu scriptures. Dayanand Saraswati declared that the only truly revealed and universally valid scriptures were the Vedas and that, therefore, no faith other than Aryan *Dharma* was a true religion. He rejected the *Puranas* and the epics as excrescences, and even downgraded the *Upanishads* which had been a building block in the unitarian efforts of Brahmo Samaj, to give his call to return to *Vedas*. He continued to stress the absolute superiority of Hinduism.[12] Later the adherents of Sangh Parivar used the notion of religious superiority as a weapon to strike at others.

Current fundamentalism in India, that is the politically assertive Hindu Nationalism, requires ritualistic assertion in public places, particularly aggressive assertion. This aggression takes the form of religious processions, amplified loudspeakers, rath-yathras, public meetings and other visible or audible evidence of one's faith. But these public exhibitions of militant faith, in turn, incite fear among other religious groups and also arouse a tit-for-tat sentiment and the vicious cycle continues.[13] Interestingly, the Shiv Sena actualized on this Ganesh festival to build an exclusivistic identity of the Maharashtrians against the non-Maharashtrians. But the fact remains that it is not the entire Maharashtrians who are the beneficiaries of this ill-conceived scheme. Even if the upper echelon among the Maharashtrians made the best out of this religio-centric politics, the lower rung among the Maharshtrians remained where they were before or their social condition has deteriorated further.

Fascism

At the popular level the term fascism has been applied at one time or the other to virtually every single form of twentieth-century radicalism or authoritarianism, as well as to many moderate phenomenon. More specifically, in terms of political regimes, there has developed since the 1930s a broad tendency to refer to any form of right-wing authoritarian system that is not specifically socialist as fascist. In this usage the Italian regime of Benito Mussolini is used as terminological prototype for all non-Marxist or non-socialist authoritarian systems, however they may differ from Italian Fascism or among themselves. Rigorous scholarly and historical definition of fascism, however, refers to the concrete historical phenomena of the European fascist movements that emerged between the two World Wars, first in the Italian fascist and second in the German National Socialist movements founded in 1919-20 and then among their numerous counterparts in many European countries.

Consequently, the term fascism has been used primarily to identify the political system by which Italy was ruled from 1922 to 1945. It is also used to identify a prototype of totalitarianism and is applied to variations of political system's thought to parallel the Italian one. Fascism also has been seen as a mass movement to which an anomic society turns to in a period of crisis for reassurance and the promise of satisfaction of essential community needs. But the promise was not kept. Behind the seemingly innovative facade, economic and social stagnation prevailed.[14] Thus, in times of social and national dilemma, powerful personalities or forces emerge in the scene promising to offer solace and security. This leads to mass following, which assumes the form of mass mobilization. Thus, fascism could be defined as right-wing dictatorship or totalitarianism. Fascism is also seen as despotism, that is, the tyranny of an individual or a group of people who want to establish and ensure their rule.

The uniqueness of fascism lay in its opposition to nearly all the existing political sectors, left, right, and centre. It was antiliberal, anticommunist, as well as anti-socialist, and anti-conservative, though willing to undertake temporary alliance with other groups, primarily rightists. In their ideology and political goals, fascist movements represented the most intense and radical form of nationalism known to modern Europe. They aimed at the creation of a new kind of nationalist authoritarian state that was not merely based on traditional principles of models. Though all the fascist groups differed among themselves on economic goals, they all hoped to organize some new kind of regulated, multi-class, integrated national structure, diversely called national corporatist, national socialist or national syndicalist. All fascist movements aimed either at national imperial expansion or at least at a radical change in the nation's relationship with other powers to change in the nation's relationship with other powers to enhance its strength and prestige. Their doctrines rested on a philosophical basis of idealism and voluntarism, and normally involved the attempt to create a new form of modern, self-determined secular culture.

The uniqueness of fascism was particularly expressed through the movements' style and organization. Great emphasis was placed on the aesthetic structure of meetings, symbols, and political choreography, relying especially on romantic and mystical aspects. Fascist movements attempted to achieve mass mobilization, together with the militarization of political relationships and style and with the goal of a mass party militia. It also placed a strong emphasis on positive evaluation on the use of violence, and strongly stressed the masculine principle and male dominance. Though they espoused an organic concept of society, they vigorously championed a new elitism and exalted youth above other phases of life. In leadership, fascist movements exhibited a specific tendency toward an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command.

Fascists claimed to represent all classes of national society, particularly the broad masses. The broadest sector of fascist support comparatively speaking was provided by the lower middle class. Historically speaking, fascism had most appeal in countries defeated or destablised by the effects of World War I. In nearly all the countries antifascists were generally much more numerous than fascists.[15]

Some of the salient features of fascist movements are given below:

1. Their political philosophies were a mix of radical/fundamental ideas and mysticism, left oriented in their slogans cum rhetoric and conservative cum rightist in politics.
2. They all created a powerful executive with total disregard for democratic consultation. They all shared a fundamental dislike for liberalism and socialism. Basically they were opposed to any type of assertions and movements, since these threatened their hegemony. They denied divergence of class interests between various opposing elements like the exploited and the exploiter, the dominant castes and the Dalits.
3. Their mass parties are on parliamentary lines giving them a democratic face to enter into every streams of the society. But in reality, they uphold the presidential form of governance, since they believe in '**One Nation – One Leader**' theory.
4. They all admire the cult of violence, training for war, giving free reign to sadistic psychological character traits. Authoritarian programmes, emphasising conformity, discipline and submission hold sway, followed by militarisation of society under autocratic leadership.
5. Nostalgia for glorified, unified, mythical and legendary past came to the fore in the cultural and political sphere. Intellectuals and communities not conforming to the myths came under the attack of the movement.
6. Women were relegated to traditional feminine roles as '*sati-savitris*', that is, housewives, servants, nurses and breeders of racially pure warriors for the army. In the democratic polity they are used as vote banks and not as political participants.
7. Big industrialists, businessmen and landowners provide financial support and the electoral support come from the middle class and often from the lower middle class, worst hit by the economic aspirations as well as by the economic crisis.[16]
8. Fascists consider their national, racial, religious, caste and class group 'superior' and treat all other people 'inferior' to them.

9. By considering themselves superior to others, they whip up extreme patriotism and mostly misplaced patriotism to consolidate communal or 'national pride'.
10. This gives them leverage to project the inferior as the scapegoat enemies, "the other", who is the sole cause of present social ills and against whom all the social hate, aggression and violence is let loose.[17]

One of the most fundamental precepts of fascism is that it creates an absolute enemy and thus focuses the attention of the entire population on the annihilation of this enemy. The logic behind this proposal is that the enemy is the sole cause of the downfall of the nation and it is only by the elimination or atleast by attacking the enemy that the pride of the nation can be salvaged. Sebastian Kappen in his perceptive analysis of the emergence of fascism argues that the opponents of Nazism failed to see or saw too late the explosive power of political myth. Following French Revolution they believed that reason is the primary determinant of politics and the main organising principle of society. But the advocates of reason failed to see that not only the heart but also the flesh and blood have reason which reason cannot understand.[18]

By way of retrospect one can identify the powerful utilization of myth in the political discourse world over in the twentieth century. Kappen reasons that myth as the symbolic interpretation of reality in terms of transcendent events, that is, events in a time beyond time, and a place beyond place, can evoke faith and commitment unconditional. It can also appeal to emotions and mobilise the psychic energies locked up in the collective unconscious. Finally, myth is not a mere object of contemplation but an invitation to action.[19] It is this aspect of unleashing of the collective energy of the majority community on the pretext of a common enemy that has provided the scope for a small minority saffron brigade to uphold its totalitarian principles.

Another constituent element of Nazism's myth is that it managed to unify various social categories under the banner of unification of Germany. In this exercise, it projected the entire society as one organism in which individuals, groups and classes sacrifice their private interests and work solely of the greatness and the glory of the German race[20]. The Sangh Parivar also has managed to unify a broad section of the population under the scheme of one nation and one culture myth.

Table 1.2: Similarities and differences between Hindutva and Fascism

Fascism	Hindutva
Similarities	
1. Came up and became strong in the wake of powerful workers movement.	1. It got strengthened in post-Mandal Period: after fearing the assertion of other backward and lower castes
2. Projects 'National' interests over the interests of the people.	2. Projects 'National' interests over the interests of the people especially 'minorities' in a very offensive manner.
3. Expansionist: attacked neighbour countries on the ground that they were part of earlier German empire.	3. Has the seeds of expansionism: Concept of 'Akhand Bharat' (undivided India, including Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka).
4. Targeting Jews as the cause of ills of the country.	4. Targeting Muslims and minorities as the cause of the ills of the country.
5. Glorification of the past and superiority of a particular race.	5. Same
6. Oppressive to Jews (subjected them to physical elimination), communists/workers (physical violence to reduce their strength), women (their place is in the kitchen, church and their primary role is in rearing children).	6. Oppressive to workers (produce for Nation, don't bother about your Rights), Dalits (oppose Mandal in a subtle way of Demand for meritocracy), women (they should be ideal wives and mothers), minorities (they should subjugate themselves to Hindu culture).
7. The regime implemented its pogrom through creation of mass hysteria.	7. Post Babri demolition resulted in social space full of terror and anti-human rights, 'pro'-national hysteria.
8. Urban middle class and landed aristocracy are the main social base.	8. Urbanised middle class and rich peasants, upper castes and some backward castes: the main support base.

Table 1.2: *Contd..*

Fascism	Hindutva
Differences	
1. Quick ascendancy to power on the anti-Jew plank.	1. Long gestation period: successful communalisation of Social space in 'cowbelt' region; Success in polarisation of upper castes only after implementation Of Mandal Commission.
2. The social condition was coloured by severe post-war economic crisis.	2. Medium range social crisis from mid 80's: rising unemployment, increasing poverty.

[Source: Adapted from P.R. Ram. Fascism of Sangh Parivar]

Plural society

The term plural society has been used to describe societies, usually at the level of independent states or colonial territories, characterized by sharp internal cleavages between ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic groups. The Marxists have generally preferred the term 'multi-national states', and the thrust of their analysis has been to explain the cleavages and conflicts of these societies by reference to a combination of internal class cleavages and unequal exchanges between the core and periphery of the capitalist world-system.

Most social scientists look at Asia, Africa, Latin America and have focused on the following characteristics: a history of violent conquest, followed by colonialism, slavery, indenture, and other form of highly institutionalized segmentation and inequality between ethnic or racial groups.[21]

The religious plurality of India extends far beyond the Hindu-Muslim question. There is a large and prominent Sikh population, and a substantial numbers of Christians, whose history goes back at least to the 4th century AD. India also had Jewish settlements since shortly after the fall of Jerusalem. Parsees had moved to India from less tolerant Persia. There are millions of Jains, and practitioners of Buddhism, which had been for a long period, the official religion of many of the Indian emperors. Religious plurality also refers to diversity within Hinduism. Its divisions are not those only of caste but also of schools of thought.[22]

Communalism

In common parlance communalism is considered as the force that generates crisis and conflict between two communities. Since communal tendencies have been part of societies and nations it becomes all the more difficult to present an all encompassing, and a definite definition of communalism. K. N. Panikkar argues that the various definitions given by the academicians identifies communalism as 'an ideology', ' a false consciousness', ' a struggle for scarce resources', 'an instrument of ruling class politics' etc.[23] While addressing the issue according to his time Dr. Ambedkar declared, "Communalism as a peculiar Indian question has two different aspects. In its lesser intent, the communal question relates to the representation of Hindus and Muslims in the legislatures and in its greater extent the communal question relates to the deliberate creation of Muslim State".[24]

According to Bipin Chandra, communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political and economic interests. It is also believed that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians form different and distinct communities which are independently and separately structured or consolidated; that all the followers of a religion share not only a community of religious interests but also common secular interests, that is, common social, political, economic and cultural interests. In this process, religion becomes the basis of their basic social identity and the determinant of their basic social relationships. The communal view asserts that religious distinction is the most important or fundamental distinction or cleavage or distinguishing mark. It is also maintained that the social, cultural and economic interests of each religious community are dissimilar and divergent. Further, in any election and democratic participation the followers of one religious community is bound to vote for the interests of their candidate and the candidate in turn is to work for the interests of his community.[25]

Bipin Chandra further argues that communalism has taken three forms in modern India. 1) Communal Nationalists: they wanted to integrate communal interests into national interests because they believed that there was no clash between them. They also believed that within the developing nationalism the different communal interests could be protected. Some expressions of this trend are Hindu Congressmen, Nationalist Muslims, Nationalist Sikhs etc. 2) The Liberal Communalists: this category of people accepted democratic, humanist and nationalist values, but pursued their separate communal interests and tried to resolve them within this liberal framework when these were in mutual conflict. This group believed in and practiced but they also upheld liberal, democratic, humanist and nationalist values. Bipin Chandra states that the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha till late 1920 practised liberal communalism. 3) Extreme Communalism or Fascist Communalism: Working broadly within the fascist syndrome, it was emotional and based on fear and hate and had a tendency to use violence or terror as a weapon against opponents.

Continuing his debate from a historical point of view, Bipin Chandra further argues that basic change from liberal communalism occurred during 1937-38 when both Hindu and Muslim Communalism, in the form of Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, started becoming fascist and irrational in their ideology and politics. Communalism was now sought to be organized on a new popular basis and as a mass movement around aggressive, extremist communal politics among the urban lower middle classes, which could be done only on an extremist basis or around a fascist outlook.[26] But one should not only look at the differences between these three forms but one should also pay attention to the mutual interaction, impact and continuity.

Achin Vanaik argues that Hindu communalism organizationally represented by the forces of Sangh Parivar, is not to be equated to Hindu nationalism. Hindu communalism in its systematized hostility to the Muslim Other, and in its larger project for social and political change, is a deeply reactionary and strongly authoritarian rightwing movement, having a corresponding ideological thrust, whereas Hindu nationalism comes in many kinds. By using the term Hindu Nationalism, the forces of the Sangh parivar give themselves a more benign image than they can ever deserve, as well as imply continuities with other less pernicious forms of Hindu nationalism. As for Hindutva, it is an important part of the wider ideology of Hindu communalism; perhaps its most coherently organized part. But it is not the whole of that ideology. He further argues that Muslim communalism in India is more socially and spatially restricted, and not linked to any pan-Indian Islamic movement. Muslim communalism in particular locale promotes the organizational growth of Hindu communalism. But the reverse does not necessarily happen. He also cautions that all communalisms have to be tackled together because they feed on each other.[27]

Communalism is not a new phenomenon in Indian sub-continent. In fact, communalism dates back in Bengal to the foundation of the Sen rule in 12th century A.D., which replaced the four-century old Pal rule. The Buddhist intellectuals and the masses were persecuted during the Brahmin dominated Sen rule. Many of these intellectuals had fled to neighbouring Nepal and other places. Later, a big section of masses adopted Islam preached and propagated by the Sufi Saints. The Sufis fought against the orthodox Muslims and did not allow the latter to take over the Muslim masses. The Sufis also encouraged the development of the Bengali language, literature and culture.[28]

Hindutva and Fundamentalism

The resurgence of Hindutva in the recent past, to a large measure, drew upon the mobilising potential of religio-cultural symbols. It took Ram to the people through symbols to which they could easily relate. Beginning with *Ram Sila Puja*, the *Sangh Parivar* resorted to a series of symbolic acts: *Ram Jyotis*, *Ram Padukas*, *Ram Prasad*, *Ram Pataka*, *Ram Gulal*, and so on. Ram, Ayodhya and the Mandir were thus brought close to the social and cultural life of the people. In doing so what the Sangh Parivar has achieved is to identify itself with the cultural life of the Hindus and to project itself as the champion of their religion.[29] Panikar goes on to discuss that the BJP was successful in making the symbols meaningful and thus effecting communal mobilization precisely because of the institutional support it commanded. Through long and sustained work it has succeeded in setting up a network of organizations which practically embraces almost all walks of life, be it education, media, music or the visual arts. One scholar has estimated the number of such organizations at 600 with their branches spreading all over the country. A major support base of Hindutva is the network of schools organized throughout the country.

Tapan Basu and others are of the opinion that, "At the heart of Hindutva lies the myth of a continuous thousand-year old struggle of Hindus against the Muslims as the structuring principle of Indian history. Both communities are assumed to have been homogeneous blocs – of Hindu patriots, heroically resisting invariably tyrannical 'foreign Muslim rulers'. Every element in this myth has been demolished by the historians. If the early Muslim kings had been invaders, so presumably were the Aryans. Nor a Muslim peasant or artisan be classified as a member of a Muslim ruling class... If the Hindu alone (occasionally) had to pay the *jeziya*, there were other taxes for which only Muslim subjects were liable. There were many wars between Muslim and Hindu kings, but only a few instances, prior to 19th century, of what even dimly resembled the mass communal movements of today. Academic refutations have gone on, but myths persist and proliferate providing a simplistic, hand-me-down history to the layman.[30]

The history of 53 years of independence is plagued with crisis and conflicts based on caste, class, race, language, region and religion. It is also the unwritten history of dehumanization and oppression of the downtrodden masses. On the one hand, the ruling caste and class have tried to maintain the *status quo* unaltered. For this they maneuvre and manipulate the religious and cultural identities. On the other hand the hounded and haunted communities and the outcasted and dispossessed groups are raising their head and demanding their right place in society. They refuse to believe in the *karma* and the *dharma* which has expelled and exiled them from the human existence. This has shaken the Brahminical forces. They have continued to curtail the liberation move of the lower strata and the minorities. The Brahminical forces have always hitch-hocked on the shoulders of toiling masses and the exploited castes. T of the Hindutva force is once again a death cry to prote[illegible] promote the position, power and the privileges of the Brahmanical forces. It is this factor that need to be unraveled to comprehend the ascent of the Hindutva force in the present context.

Rajni Kothari in his perceptive analysis exposes the real nature of Brahminism. He maintains that contrary to common belief, Brahminism is not a fixed dogma but is highly adaptable and looking for ever new pastures, engaging both in backlash against the newly emerging forces and cooperation of the middle and lower castes, the backwards and, most of all, the Dalits, especially the highly educated and influential sections thereof, who have been able to move out of the menial and depressing condition of the toiling masses and who are able to spearhead a movement against the dominant forces but have instead been 'sanskritized'.[31] The BJP, which is the political face of the Hindutva force, has been successful in roping in the socially mobile Dalits and the Tribals into its fold. This is not an at random decision but it falls under a well planned policy of coopting the so-called elite or urban leadership among these marginalized communities so as to keep the entire oppressed communities at bay.

Table 1.3: Systematization of Caste Power

Broad Classification	Caste	Marriage*	Aryan Birth	Twice born	Power over people	Ritual performance
Chaturvarna/ Caste Hindus	Brahmin	+	+	+	+ (Ritual)	+
	Kshatriya	+	+	+	+ (Political	–
	Vaisy	+	+	+	+ (Economic)	–
	Shudra	+	–	–	–	–
Panchamas/ Outcastes	Avarnas	–	–	–	–	–

[* Marriage was within one's own caste, but some time women from the lower caste were taken as wives by those upper in the ladder but women were never given as wives to those who are lower in the ladder].

Our own attempt here is to unravel and identify the socio-political, economic and cultural environment that provided the broad landscape for the emergence of Hindutva force. It is also an endeavour to expose the rise of the Brahminical communal nationalism which threatens to break the society asunder. But to do this one has to also look at the emergence of the Brahminical social order. As shown in Table 1, the three upper castes within the varna system, the Brahmins, the Rajputs, the Banias owned and controlled religious, political and economic power of society. Due to this they also formulated and reformulate social structure of in their favour.

In course of time Brahminical social order came to hold sway and it determined the life situation and life style of the entire population. In the course of time, the society was divided in to two broad categories, namely, *agada* meaning 'forward' and *pichada* meaning 'backward'. The upper castes who comprised the forward community continued to enforce strict surveillance of caste rules of untouchability and in return kept the backwards 'outcasted' from property, power, position and priesthood. Starting from reciting religious texts to pursuing knowledge became prohibited to them. The backwards on the other hand continued to remain in their state of total and complete segregation, exclusion, exploitation, and marginalization. Historically speaking, any attempt by the backward community to wriggle out of their dehumanized social condition was severely dealt with. Thus the backward community could not even contemplate of emancipation from their degraded and degenerated state of affairs. One also needs to identity the immediate political interest of the Sangh Parivar and also its long term socio-economic objectives.

For a conscious understanding and analysis, it is appropriate to locate the ascent of Hindutva within the broader framework of emerging fundamentalism at the global level. As stated above, fundamentalism is not a unique phenomenon of India. But since we are dealing with the ascent of Hindutva force we want to look at the relationship between fundamentalism and Hindutva. It is important to highlight and uphold this truth that the masses of India are not fundamentalist in nature or by choice. They are essentially pluralistic in worship, in living and in thought pattern. The fundamental

Table 1.4

Fundamentalism	Hindutva
1. Targeting against liberal ethos of the society.	1. Targeting against liberal and secular ethos of the society.
2. Imposition of retrograde social values selectively culled out from religious Texts.	2. Imposition of retrograde social values selectively culled out from Brahminical religious texts.
3. Anti imperialist noises.	3. Mouthing of Swadeshi "economic policy'.
4. Women under patriarchal control of father, husband and son.	4. Projection of women as ideal mothers and housekeepers.
5. Claim that 'Our' creed is divine and 'handed over' by divine.	5. Claim that Vedas are created by Brahma, the God of creation.
6. Holy book coming from God himself is projected to be the ideal goal.	6. Holy book coming from God himself is projected to be the ideal goal and total disregard for laws and legislations that go against its interests.
7. Abhor pluralism	7. Demand homogeneity of Hindu culture
8. Creates hysteria (against Shah of Iran, against women in Saudi Arabia).	8. Political onslaught to impose interests upper class, middle class, upper caste and whole society.
9. Hysteria against women, imperialism, and neighboring countries.	9. Creates hysteria against internal enemy, the Muslims and the minorities.

Source: Adapted from P.R. Ram. Fascism of Sangh Parivar]

notions superimposed on to Hinduism under the guise of threat to the national integrity and sovereignty by the proponents of Hindutva force are imaginary in nature. They are extra-historical, extra-cultural and extra-social. Basically it is a political credo to maintain and manipulate power and above all to uphold the hegemony of the Brahminical social order. As shown in Table 1.4 the champions of

'Hindu renaissance' and renewal hold in esteem the older social laws but do not abide by the legislations of the state. But there is a double standard in it. Where it is to the benefit of the pursuance of establishing their monopoly they will swear by rules and regulations and where it goes against their interests they will have scant regard for them. Finally, it is not just the communal fervour that is raised under the guise of religious nationalism but the social and political theory of the Sangh Parivar in general and the Rashtriya Ṣwayamsevak Sangh in particular that needs to be examined in depth.

In the final analysis, fundamentalism- whether Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Jewish-are born in communally perceived times of crisis. They are concerned with critiques of contemporary ways of life, and look to a future where the true believer is twice blessed with 'true' faith and secular power. They are defensive movements which resort to a selective retrieval of the tradition and in the process, its redefinition They envelop themselves in an aura of idealism but are, in today's world, generally aggressive, if not violent, in character. They are totalitarian and intolerant to dissent.[32] Since, fundamentalism is a common virus in every religious tradition it calls for collective efforts to arrest and to eliminate the spread of fundamentalism. This book attempts to look at the various aspects of Hindu fundamentalism, or to name it properly the Brahminical fundamentalism and the alternatives that need to be worked out to annihilate the monstrous growth of fundamentalism.

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"A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharatvarsha, from the Indus to the Seas as his Father-Land as well as his Holy Land that is the cradle land of his religion".

V.D. Savarkar

Chapter II

The Evolution of *Sangh Parivar*

The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism

Sangh parivar is a nomenclature which refers to the various frontal organizations that form part of the Hindutva force. The term Sangh indicates the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS). Since, it is the RSS which gave genesis to a number of front organizations, in course of time all the groups or associations that follow the ideology and the actions of RSS came to be addressed as Sangh Parivar (SP). *Parivar* in Hindi language means a family and here it refers to joint family. The following are some of the frontal organizations of the Sangh Parivar: the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Bajrang Dal (BD), the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad (ABVP). There are some more organizations that the Sangh founded at regular intervals. Though the Shiv Sena is not a direct offshoot of the Sangh Parivar, yet since it follows similar ideology and methodology, in course of time it also has been clubbed with the Sangh Parivar. Moreover in terms of political ideology it is very much akin to the RSS. This does not mean that there are no differences between these two groups. But the fact is that similarities between the two are greater than differences. Some people who have become disturbed by the activities of the *Sangh Parivar* address it as *Sangh giroh*, that is, 'the gang' of the Sangh.

Gleaning through historical records, one becomes aware of the fact that from 1980 onwards the Sangh Parivar has come to occupy a specific space in the society and polity of India. Though the Sangh Parivar claims to be a cultural organization its actions are more political, social and economic in nature. It also has long term plans to bend and mould the minds of the younger generation. Since, it is in power in the centre it has the finance and the political power to plan and to execute various actions through which it can influence the mindset of the future generation.

Significantly, the Sangh Parivar in the last twenty years has emerged as a formidable force that targets the minorities, especially the Muslims and the Christians. Major communal propaganda, communal conflicts and communal violence have been planned and executed with precision and definitiveness by the various outfits of the Sangh Parivar. Most of the inquiry reports by the commissions constituted after communal riots have indicted the frontal organizations of Sangh Parivar for being overtly or covertly instrumental in these riots in one way or the other. Except some of the specific riots where the Sikh community has been the major victim of riot, in many of the other riots, nearly 65% of the victims have been the poor Muslims, while other poor strata of the society constitute the remaining. The communal attacks were preceded and accompanied with 'hate campaign' against the minority communities. This hate campaign was based on rumours and misinformation which was actively propagated by the SP and they later became part of the 'social common sense'.[1] The common person is made to believe many make-belief rumours and he/she was at times 'forced' to engage in destructive actions.

Above all the emergence of SP has led to direct confrontation between the hindutva forces and the aspirations and assertions of the marginalized communities. Right from the rath-yatra of L.K. Advani to other activities of the parivar they were successfully aimed at sidetracking the powerful aspirations of the backward castes which erupted after the announcement of the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report Recommendations.

The ascent of the saffron brigade should also be historically located in the emerging socio-political scenario of India. The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Election Manifesto 1996 with its promise 'For a Strong and Prosperous India' spells out the rise of Hindutva nationalism. The manifesto declares, "Hindutva or cultural nationalism, shall be the rainbow which will bridge our present to our glorious past and pave the way for an equally glorious future; it will guide the transition from *swarajya,* that is, self-rule to *surajaya,* that is, good-governance. . Hindutva is a unifying principle which alone can preserve the unity and integrity of our nation. It is a collective endeavour to protect and re-energize the soul of India, to take us into the next millennium as a strong and prosperous nation.[2]

Acharya Giriraj Kishore, the vice-president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad after the three-day 8th Dharma Sansad in 1999 declared that, 'The political agenda of the BJP may change but our agenda is fixed and there can not be any change in it. Hindu agenda alone was the national agenda'.[3] Once again on 9th July 2000, Acharya asserted that, 'The Ayodhya Phase II would commence from October this year and the construction of temple at Ayodhya will begin from January 2001'. He also stated that the proposed rath-yatra from Jaipur carrying the statue of Ramlala would begin in October-November 2000 and culminate in January.[4] This move is seen not so much to uphold reverence and respect to Ramlala but to arrest the eroding mass base of the BJP in the Hindi belt in general and Uttar Pradesh in particular.

These statements provide a glimpse of the emerging Hindutva ideology. In spite of the tactical differences among the BJP, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal and the Shiv Sena leaders and ranks, a general consensus has emerged among them about the definition of Hindutva. To put it in a general way, Hindutva is a highly structured belief system involving the interpretation of the past, an analysis of the present, and a set of precepts and imperatives for future conduct. Under this scheme, they stress the inimical traits of Hindu religious myths and imagery and personalities like Rama, Hanuman, temple at Ayodhya etc. And they also deny and depreciate traditions like Buddhism, Islam and Christianity which have been part of Indian tradition. These attempts are translated into coherent set of metaphors, idioms and emotionally laden expressions in order to elevate them to a position of authority to impose unity over an amorphous Hindu community.

The various activities undertaken by the Sangh in the last one decade clearly exhibits that there is an enduring hostility to reason and intellectual honesty and a support for emotion. By propagating Hindu Nationalism and through it Hindutva, they are trying to provide the myth of the unified Hindu social system while totally hiding the inherent divisions and disunity based on caste-class-gender-race aspects. It also calls for absolute obedience to the leadership. This is based on the RSS ideology which highlights the 'sacrosanct' role of the ancient sages and today calls for absolute obedience to the *sarsanghchalak* who assumes office without any debate or vote. Loyalty within the family and loyalty to the community is demanded and thus patriarchy is upheld. The Advanis, the Singhals, Mishras, Sharmas and Singhs are presiding over the patriarchal family of the 'Hindu community'.[5]

The saffron brigade carries its argument for unifying Hindus to its logical conclusion while redefining Indian 'nationalism'. Their fundamental argument is that the Hindus are a majority and hence they should exercise authority, precedence and domination over others. This is clearly demonstrated by Ashok Singhal's warning, " If the Hindu sentiments sweep the whole country, the Muslims would realise that neither the police nor the government nor political parties would be able to save them from the wrath".[6] Thus neither the BJP nor Vajpayee with their moderate myth will save any one. They have also demonstrated that they do not care for anything – court, administration etc. Interestingly, they are the perpetrators of communal orgy as well as the patrons of those anti-social elements that engage in communal violence. They are also the arbitrators between the marauders and the victims. This was amply demonstrated by the statements of the present Home Minister Mr. Advani. During the rath-yatra when he was arrested and then released in Samastipur in Bihar he stated, "Lok Shakti has triumphed over rashtra-shakti", that is, 'people's power has won over state power'. The course of action taken by the various fronts of Sangh Parivar,[7] from the early 1980s onwards clearly indicates this mindset.

One thing which is clear from the activities of the Sangh is that the proponents of Hindutva have succeeded in reconstituting the public realm by a consensus in the primacy of Hindu solidarity and devotion to the Hindu symbols which were claimed as "national". The leaders aimed at turning the audience into performers in rituals like rath-yatra and kar-seva the purpose of which was to reinforce and document a collective faith in Hindutva. It is also significant to note that the anit-Mandal agitators who some times publicly expressed their opposition to Advani's rath-yathra felt disappointed with Advani because they too felt that Advani has been lukewarm towards the aggrieved Hindu community represented by them.

Any demand for autonomy by various castes, communities and ethnic groups is also opposed by these forces. But they are forgetting the role of their own predecessors among the Hindu elite, upper and middle class and caste who were entitled Rajas and Rai Bahadurs for collaborating with the colonial rulers. For the BJP-RSS-VHP-BD-Shiva Sena nexus (Sangh Parivar), the anti-Muslim sentiment provides a popular underpinning for their attempts at consolidating Hindu collective self-representation. Even at ordinary times, at the gut level of most Hindus there is the pathological hatred and fear of the Muslims bred by domestic and social upbringing and reinforced by the trauma of partition. Here again the role played by the leaders of the Hindu community in instigating and indulging in riots is conveniently forgotten and the role of the Muslim leaders highlighted.

Another sentiment also operates within the Sangh Parivar. That is, the socially, economically and politically weaker section of the society can not take out their grievances on the powerful section of the Hindu society. They can take it only on the weaker section among the Muslims. This is what Sartre called as "the poor man's snobbery", which is clearly seen in the actions of the Hindu lumpen proletariat in their attack on the Muslims and Sikhs. The 1984 riot is an apt example of this. The Congress leaders of Delhi used the slum dwellers to attack, loot and rob the Sikh community. The age-old affinity, unity (not uniformity) and collective consciousness were destroyed. This destruction led to deep-seated distrust.

The Indian State should be faulted for its 'pseudo secularism' that is, for not protecting the right of the minorities but for practicing a policy of encouraging co-existence of all forms of religious superstitions and obscurantism. In the last forty years, the ruling class played the game of being secular in its policies and at the same time it tried to appease the majority community with some concessions. In the bargain, both the parties feel wronged by the state. This provided the Sangh a fertile soil to sow seeds of discontent, disrespect and dissension.

From the hegemonic network of Hindu symbols the Hindutva leaders have pulled out the factor of martyrdom and are using it to the full. The death of the kar-sevaks has been one such reality. By involving the memory of the martyrs the followers are raised to transcendental realm of brotherhood. Carrying the *asthi kalash*, that is, the ashes of the dead kar-sevaks all over India, it is enacting this aspect. The kargil Vijay Diwas is also aimed at mobilising the sentiments of the majority community. While at one level there is an attempt made to lure the ordinary masses, on the other hand there is an attempt to attract the intellectuals. When the kar-sevaks were arrested two BJP leaders of Delhi, V K Malhotra and Madan Lal Khurana challenged the human rights groups saying that "these wardens of human rights fought for Kashmir and Punjab terrorists but they have not opened their mouth when our kar-sevaks were arrested".[8]

The Rise of Hindu Communalism

The Hindu nationalism which in course of time becomes Hindu communalism was constructed as an ideology between the 1870s and 1920s. The essence of Hindu nationalism is derived from the socio-religious movements initiated by upper caste Hindus, such as the Arya Samaj that was operative in Punjab. This organization which was founded in 1875, emerged as a reaction against the British colonial state and Christian missions. Its primary concern was to maintain the basic elements of the traditional social order and culture of the Hindus while adapting that tradition to take account of certain aspects of western society.[9] Thus, a sense of double talk and double dealing was present in the emerging hindutva force right form the beginning of its conception. The Arya Samaj of Dayanada was not a proponent of Hindu nationalism. They considered Hinduism as a degraded form of vedic religion. Hence, the Arya Samaj leadership in 1891 directed its members to declare themselves as 'Aryas' and not as Hindus at the time of census.

In the 1920s some of the Hindu ideologues felt threatened by the mobilization of Muslims under the Khilafat movement and hence, they founded the Hindu Mahasabha. The proponents of Hindu

Mahasabha claimed that it was founded to give a collective defence of the socio-political interests of Hindus. But in reality it began to operate on the fear psychosis that the 'threatening other,' the Muslims might take over the country. From various historical records it can be gauged that the process of identity-building especially in the form of Hindu nationalism or Hindu communal nationalism crystallised in reaction to a Hindu sense of inferiority or vulnerability which was directly related to the stereotypes of the 'others', that is the Muslims and the British. The British also contributed to this evil phenomenon by employing its divide and rule policy.

Savarkar and the Genesis of Hindutva

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is usually identified as the first exponent of Hindutva. Savarkar was a Maharashtrian Brahmin. It is recorded that only with the arrival of Savarkar as the president of the Hindu Mahasabha (HM) in 1936 the organization assumed a distinctive Hindu ideology, a theory of Hindu Nation and Hindu nationalism. At the core of Savarkar's ideology is the concept of Hindutva.[10] According to Savarkar, the essentials of Hindutva are *rashtra*, (a common nation), *jati* (a common race), and *sanskriti*, (a common civilization). All these essentials could best be summed up by stating in brief that it is not only a *Pitribhu* but also a *Punyabhu*. By Punyabhu what is implied is the essentials of *sanskriti* which also includes *sanskaras*, that is, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, that makes the land a holy land.[11] Here one becomes acutely aware of the fact that ritual ceremonies and sacraments are unduely emphasized. This is done at the expense of good conduct, upholding rights and justice, the contribution everyone needs to make for the betterment of society.

Further, in his over arching scheme to enforce every one under the fold of Hindutva, Savarkar unhesitatingly called the Sikhs also as Hindus. He went to the extent of saying, 'The Sikh of today is the Hindu of yesterday and the Hindu of today may be the Sikh of tomorrow. The change of a dress, or a custom, or a detail of daily life can not change the blood or the seed, nor can efface and blot out history itself'. With total disregard for history, Savarkar asserted that, 'we are Sikhs, Hindus and Bharatiyas. We are all three put together and none exclusively'.[12] This he claimed on the basis of his argument that the Aryans who settled in India at the dawn of history already formed a nation now embodied in the Hindus. He also argued that Hindutva rested on three pillars: geographical unity, racial features and common culture. He goes on to maintain that Hinduism is only one of the attributes of 'Hinduness' (Jeffrelot:1996, p 26). Thus, Savarkar offers an inclusivistic understanding of Hindutva. This is distorting history, since he misrepresents the protest element inbuilt in the Sikh religious traditions.

Interestingly for Savarkar, Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, and a part of Hindutva. Hindutva embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu Race.[13] For him the Hindutva encompassed the entire gamut of cultural, social, political and linguistic aspects of Hindu life. But even a cursory glance reveals the fact that this is once again an attempt to pursue a blind alley. Because in this scheme of construction innumerable religious communities, sects, castes, indigenous Tribals are forcefully incorporated or 'outcasted'. The political message of his Hindutva is "you who by race, blood, culture and nationality posses almost all the essentials of Hindutva and had been forcibly snatched out of our ancestral home by the hand of violence, you only need to render whole hearted love to the Mother and recognize her as *Pitribhu* but even as *Puniyabhu* and you are most welcome".[14] Going further, one also observes that Savarkar's "Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History" totally overlooks the three century long Mughal period. On 25th May 1941 he declared, "Hinduise all politics and militarize Hindudom". Thus, it needs to be emphasized here that there is a total disregard for historical growth of the nation and society, as well as being blind to the oblique social stratification which upheld the racial superiority of the Brahminical social system, and also the interaction between the majority and minority communities.

K.B. Hedgewar and the Founding of RSS

Influenced by Savarkar's theory of Hindutva, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar established *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, that is, the 'National Volunteer Force' in 1925 with the express mission to organize the Hindus on nationalistic lines. It is also significant that Hedgewar launched RSS in September 1925 on the festival of Dasara, a festival commemorating the victory of Ram over Ravana. K.B. Hedgewar was a Telugu Brahmin residing in Nagpur. In the early period of his life he was a member of the Congress party but later moved out of Congress and wanted to build vital and militant awareness among the Hindus of India of their common heritage and destiny. Though this objectives of Hedgewar sounds very noble the underlying objective was very different. He thought that, 'the Muslim community in the country was as dangerous to his aims as was the colonial rulers'. Since he was convinced of the fact that the Muslims 'were bent on re-establishing political rule over India', he regarded them as 'malevolent enemies of Hindu unity'.[15] Thus, once again it can be seen here that a false sense of vulnerability and inferiority in some circles led to the formation of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Some of the salient features of RSS as presented by the Sangh Parivar and the reality are as follows: firstly, it is claimed by the Sangh members that in training camps of the RSS, there is the practice of having meals in common irrespective of caste differences. But the reality, is that the RSS is an outfit of the Brahmanical forces. It derives its ideological base from Savarkar, a Maharshtrian Brahmin, it was founded by Hedgewar a Telugu Brahmin, it was developed by Golwalkar, a Karhad Brahmin and the early swayamsevaks were Brahmins. In his diary, Moonje himslef, a Deshastha Brahmin referred to RSS members as 'Brahmin youths' or 'Brahmin lads'.[16] Secondly, it is claimed by the Sangh leadership that the RSS was conceived primarily as an egalitarian vanguard of the Hindu nation. But in reality, the view of ideal society continued to be based on the varna system. The stress on equality and uniformity irrespective of intrinsic caste, class and racial differences is an attempt to gain the ancient glory. Thirdly, Hindutva is presented as an ideological *akhara* (gymnasium), where the world-renouncer becomes an activist and engages in nation building. But if one delves deeply into the membership of the leadership of RSS, one becomes acutely aware of the fact that all the early leaders were Brahmins. The third head of RSS, Balasaheb Deoras was another Telugu

Brahmin. The present Sarsanghchalak K. Sudarshan is a Tamil Brahmin. It is also significant that all the Sarsanghchalaks have been Brahmins, except the fourth head, Rajendra Singh or Raju Bhaiya as he was called, was a Rajput from the kshatriya community. Thus, most of the leaders of RSS came from the middle class and lower middle class Brahmin families. These were not renouncers but men who came from economically well off families and who enjoyed wealth within the Sangh. Interestingly, some members from the lower castes also joined RSS since it provided another route for social mobility. This phenomenon needs greater in-depth study and analysis.

Two practices reveal the ideological orientation of the RSS: *a) Prayer.* "O Lord! Grant us such might as no power on earth can ever challenge, such purity of character as would command the respect of the whole world and such knowledge as would make easy the thorny path that we have voluntarily chosen". *b) The Pledge*: "In the name of God and my ancestors, I hereby become a member of the RSS for the all round progress of Bharat Varsha by strengthening the holy Hindu Dharma, Hindu Samaj and Hindu Sanskriti. I shall do Sangha work with all my heart to the best of my ability and I shall be bound by this oath for the whole of my life".

Golwalkar and the Development of RSS

Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar was designated by Hedgewar in 1940 as his successor. Golwalkar was teaching zoology in Benaras Hindu University but left it and joined the RSS. The basic ideology of Golwalkar can be comprehended from his work 'The Bunch of Thoughts'. Here he argued that the *Muslims, Christians and the Communists* are India's **internal enemies.** The fact that he was intolerant of the minorities could be gauged from the following passage: ' The foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment- not even citizen's rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation; let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal, with the foreign races, who have chosen to live in our country.[17] Golwalkar also narrowly conceptualized India: "This country, Hindustan, the Hindu race with the Hindu Religion, Hindu Culture, and Hindu Language completes the Nation concept".[18]

We may give a brief look at the relationship between the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. Although the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha were ideologically close to each other, yet it is claimed that there was no organizational linkage between the two, particularly after the emergence of M.S. Golwalkar as the RSS Sarsanghachalak on 3rd July 1940. According to many RSS members the HM was an organization of zamindars and talukdars and hence was incapable of defending Hinduism. When under the leadership of Golwalkar the RSS tried to expand its base into Maharashtra, the Hindu Mahasabha base was disturbed. In 1942, a number of swayamsevaks defected and formed the Hindu Rashtra Dal in 1943. Nathuram Godse, the founder of this paramilitary organization, intended to use it to fight against the British rule. Hence, some claim that there was basic difference between the intention and the action of Godse. This conclusion is often drawn from the assassination of Gandhi by Godse after a few years.[19] There was one major difference between the RSS and the HM. Golwalkar was openly critical of Hindu Mahasabha's attempt to encourage recruitment of Hindus into military. But there were more similarities than differences. This is clear from the fact that the formation of Rashtra Dal had the blessings of Savarkar. Moreover, all these organizations had as their objective to unite the Hindus under the umbrella of Hindu nationalism.

The most fundamental social fact that needs to be exposed here is that, the Hindutva force wages its struggle within India's constitutional structure but attempts to push government's cultural, political and educational policies in the directions it prefers. It pretends to follow the parliamentary mode of operation but also indulges in extra-parliamentary actions whenever it finds it necessary. Textbooks were reworked by the saffron brigade to suit the Hindutva agenda. Secular, scientific and professional historians were ranged against 'Hindu Nationalistic' thinkers. The Arunachal Freedom of Religion Act passed in 1978 was perceived by Christians and Muslims as directed specifically against them, as it ruled against conversion but not against 'reconversion' to Hinduism. An ominous feature of the times was the absence of public opposition to such erosion of tolerance. On the contrary, there was a rising tide of Hindu identification, first manifesting itself as insecurity and assertiveness.[20]

As we mentioned earlier, the term Hindu was originally a geographic category used in the seventh century by the Arabs for the region of the Indus valley and beyond. It has now become a construction for a multiplicity of diverse religious beliefs, and cultural practices. It is these religious beliefs and cultural practices which the upholders of Hindu nationalism are utilising for their own benefit. Through this they want to execute their hegemonic project. Only when these religious beliefs and cultural practices are critiqued and deconstructed the real potent and progressive nature of the subaltern versions as well as their basic difference with the Brahminical practices would come to surface.[21]

The Ascent of Various Hindutva Forces

The Hindu revival movement that took place in the nineteenth century was the forerunner of Hindu Nationalism in India. Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century upto the present period, the growth and development of Hindu nationalism can be analysed under six phases.[22]

The First Phase [1850-1875]: The Genesis of Hindu Nationalism

Keshab Chandra Sen was one of the prominent proponents of nationalism. But the value of his contribution to the growth of nationalism was considerably reduced by two factors. In the first place, he accepted the British subjugation of India and secondly his inspiration came solely from the West and he had very strong leanings towards Christianity. At this cultural crisis, the tide was turned by Raj Narain Bose, himself a product of western education. He held out before his countrymen a complex and comprehensive picture of nationalism, touching almost every aspect of life, in a prospectus, which he issued in 1866, with a view to the establishing of a "society for the promotion of national feeling among the educated natives of Bengal". The object of this society was to resist the powerful tendency of imitating the west by reviving the old ideas, traditions and customs in every walk of life.

The ideas preached by Bose were enthusiastically taken up by Naba Gopal Mitra. He started an annual gathering known as the *Hindu Mela* in order to promote the national feeling, a sense of patriotism and a spirit of self-help among the Hindus. The special features of the gathering were patriotic songs, poems and lectures, a detailed review of political, social, economic and religious conditions of India, and exhibition of indigenous arts and crafts, and performance of indigenous forms of physical exercises and feats of physical strength. It had an all-India outlook and specimens of arts, crafts were collected from Benaras, Jaipur, Lucknow and Kashmir.

The Hindu Mela met altogether fourteen times from 1867 to 1880. Its importance gradually declined owing to the establishment of other associations more directly connected with the political and national movement in Bengal. But the patriotic songs and poems sung and recited in this Mela, including two by Ravindranath Tagore, then a boy of eighteen are still regarded as treasures of Bengali literature.

An association called the 'National Society' was founded after the fourth session of the *Hindu Mela*. Its object was the promotion of unity and national feeling among the Hindus. As the Mela was confined to the Hindus, objection was taken to the use of the word 'National'. Against this the National Paper, the organ of the *Hindu Mela,* observed as follows, "We do not understand why our correspondent takes exception to the Hindus who certainly form a nation by themselves, and as such a society established by them can very well be called 'national society'."

Naba Gopal elaborated his view of Hindu Nationalism through his writings. He held that the chief criterion of nationalism is unity. This unity according to him, is brought about, sustained and promoted in different peoples by different means, and on different principles. The principle which promoted nationalism amongst Greeks was love of country, among the Jews the Mosaic Law, and among the English the love of liberty. He maintained that the basis of national unity in India has been the Hindu religion. Hindu Nationality embraces all of Hindu name and Hindu faith throughout the length and breadth of Hinduism, neither geographical region nor the language is counted a disability.

Later, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee fostered the ideas of Hindu nationalism by his writings. He raised nationalism to the dignity of a religion.[23] The *Anand Math* of Bankim Chandra, which embodies the patriotic song *Bande Matharam* has been called the Bible of Hindu nationalism. His 'Mother' as conceived in the *Bande Matharam* referred both to the land of Bengal and to the deity, which was a subject matter of religion, and formed the real basis of Hindu nationalism. This idea of the patriotic Mother or of the divine Motherland and this equation of the love of country with the love of God made an instinctive appeal to the nationalistic Hindus. In his famous novel *Anand Math,* Bankim Chandra based his story on the *Sannyasi* (saint) Rebellion in Bengal of the 1770s. The *Sanyasi Rebellion* was led by ascetics and Bhavananda, one of the *Sannyasis* was the leader. In the life of these ascetics there was a fusion of religion and patriotism. They felt that in serving the country they served God or the Mother. Bankim Chandra gave a religious significance to the idea of motherland.

Meanwhile, the First War of Indian Independence of 1857 evoked a great spirit of nationalism. Though politically it was a failure, the revolt of 1857 caused great changes in the administrative system of British India. The British East India Company's rule was ended and the country came under the direct rule of the British Crown. The Revolution had spread to almost all parts of North India. The struggle threw up many a military genius, valiant fighters and martyrs, who rose to great heights of leadership and sacrificed their lives in the cause of the Motherland. The inspiring names and great deeds of Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Tope, Nana Saheb, Bala Rao, Mangal Pande and Ahmed Shah have become legend today. There are also some forgotten martyrs like Jalkhani bai who fought valiantly against the British in favour of Jhansi ki Rani. Later, these names inspired the great national leaders of the country. Moreover, the offerings of the martyrs on the sacrificial altar of the War of Independence left imperishable memories in the minds of Indians. These memories of dauntless deeds of heroism gave a vigorous momentum to the revolutionary activities of Indian nationalism.

Second Phase[1875-1905]

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was the classic period of the Indian National Movement. The Hindu nationalism also became aggressive, militant, more popular and communal in this period. In this study the period between 1875 to 1905, i.e. from the formation of Arya Samaj to the partition of Bengal is considered as the second phase of the Hindu nationalism. This was a period of revivalism and the formation of many organisations like Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Theosophical Society, etc.

Arya Samaj

Hindu nationalism got great impetus from the Arya Samaj which was founded by Dayananda Saraswathi on April 10, 1875. He was the first modern Indian philosopher who preached an aggressive and militant Hinduism and made attempts to reform Hinduism. Arya Samaj was frankly an attempt to re-establish Hinduism on the basis of Vedic traditions. It was an undertaking to induce a new spirit of aggressive militancy against everything foreign to India.

There are some according to whom the Arya Samaj had also a positive approach to nationalism. Political independence was one of the first objectives of Dayananda. Indeed, he was the first man to use the term *Swaraj.* He was also the first to insist on people using only *Swadeshi* things manufactured in India and to discard foreign things. He was the first to recognise Hindi as the national language of India. There is no doubt that the Arya Samaj aimed at the creation of an Indian nation by establishing a common religion and culture all over India. For this, it adopted *Shuddhi* or reconversion into Hinduism of all those who had once renounced it, either willingly or under pressure.[24]

The Arya Samaj was a militant sect from the very beginning. Intense patriotism was its chief inspiration. This patriotism always carried with it a spirit of intolerance to other religions, particularly to Islam. Its attitude towards Christianity was not less hostile, though certainly not so open as towards Islam. It developed an anti-foreign sentiment, which was particularly strong among the younger section. The young Arya Samajists openly declared that they were waiting for the day when they would settle their account both with Muslims and Britishers. It is also important to note that from the very beginning, the British Government did not tolerate the activities of Arya Samaj. Many times its members were arrested and its literature confiscated.

Ramakrishna Mission

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two religious personalities Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda appeared in Bengal, who were destined to wield a great influence on the future course of the new awakening in India. Ramakrishna entrusted his disciple with the task of propagating the great principles of Hinduism in India and abroad, and of bringing about an awakening, self-respect and self-reliance among his countrymen. Vivekananda, therefore, founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897, an order of monks, to live and preach the Hindu religion in its purest form in India and abroad. He also took an active part in inspiring his countrymen in every form of healthy national activity. Vivekananda was the first to introduce into the Hindu revival a missionary spirit hitherto foreign to Hindu traditions. With him religion was the inspirer of nationalism. He tried to infuse into the new generation, a sense of pride in India's past, faith in India's future and a spirit of self-confidence and self-respect.

Vivekananda projected the spiritual superiority of India. He declared, "Up India, and conquer the world with your spirituality. Spirituality must conquer the West . Heroic workers are wanted to go abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of the Vedanta the only condition of national like, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought".[25] Swami Vivekananda is often regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement in India. But if one carefully examines the thoughts of Swami Vivekanada one realizes that superior spirituality becomes an obsession with him. Also being colonized by the Britishers, he always advocated conquering the West. But if we look at the interaction between the West and India then and now, one perceives that a group of 'spiritual gurus' have tried to spread the spirituality of India. But one also comes across enormous money that is involved and the scandal that goes on.

Hansen in his analysis of Vivekananda presents this critique. Vivekandnand believed in the education of the masses so that they realize their own potentials, not as political force but as a self-confident cultural expression.[26] Thus he too remained at the realm of culture and totally ignored the crucial issues of the common masses. Moreover, this aspect of cultural unification and resurgence was proposed due to the hostility towards the British and the Muslims. The present role of Ramakrishna Mission in the Jharkhand and north-east need to be studied further to identify the route the Hindu nationalism has taken.

Theosophical Society

At this time in South India, the Theosophical Society founded at Adayar near Madras in 1886 by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott, played an important role in social and public life. Mrs. Besant joined the Society in India in 1893 and became its President in 1907, which office she continued to hold till her death in 1933. The Society played an important role in the national awakening. They asked the people of India to realise that they could be well proud of their ancient heritage and that the Christian missionaries only wanted to create in them a sense of inferiority. So the people of India were asked to look to their glorious past for inspiration and to bring in them a meaningful change. They taught the people to have faith in themselves, for once they lose heart, they lose all.

Mrs. Besant is considered as the great champion of Hinduism against all attacks. Even the errors and abuses of Hinduism she would explain away rather than attack, thereby she helped to bring back into the hearts of the people faith in their own culture and civilization, which had been badly shaken as a result of the impact of the West. The large following which she managed to gather round herself through her religious and educational work, was of great value and strength to her when in 1916-17 she took an active part in politics and carried on a raging and tearing campaign for demanding Home Rule for India. She wrote a number of books advocating the religious approach to nationalism. In her writings, she glorified Hinduism and she hailed Indian civilization as being higher than the 'mushroom civilizations' of modern times. Once again one observes the attempt of the Hindu nationalist leaders to overstretch the glorious past and forget the present crisis.

The Third Phase[1905-1920]

With the dawn of the twentieth century, the nationalist movement in India became more agitational. With the partition of Bengal in 1905, the extremists dominated the political scene. The moderates, who dominated the Indian National Congress and the Indian political scene until 1905, were impregnated with Victorian liberalism. Their leaders, such as, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee and others all believed in the development of liberal, secular nationalism. For the development of such nationalism, they sought inspiration not so much from indigenous sources of Indian culture as from the politics and attitudes of modern western countries.

But the extremists led by Tilak, Aurobindo and others, looked more to indigenous institutions for the development of Indian nationalism and they sought to rely on aggressive Hinduism rather than on the constitutionalism and liberalism of the West. The nationalism of the extremists had a religious tinge. The extremists believed that unaccompanied by any religious appeal political mobilization could not effectively rouse the Indian people. Tilak popularised Ganapathi-festivals in Maharashtra and the extremists from Bengal saw in the worship of Durga or Jagadhatri, the worship of the country or Mother India. The emphasis of the extremists on Hindu gods and Hindu religion gave their nationalism a Hindu bias.[27]

Tilak, the leader of the extremist group, used religious appeals to energise the nationalist movement. He revived the Maratha's politico-religious tradition. His views on nationalism derived considerable inspiration from Hindu sources. "The common factor", said Tilak, "in Indian society is the feeling of Hindutva or devotion to Hinduism". He appealed not merely to the English educated intellectuals, but also to the illiterate and he sought to forge a political weapon out of the social and religious sentiments of the illiterate. He wanted to energise political nationalism with the dynamite of religion and to utilise religious festivals for the cause of nationalism.

Tilak like others failed to take note of the social conditions of the illiterates, who mainly came from the lower castes. Though, freedom fighters like Tilak sought to ensure the presence of the lower castes in the struggle for political freedom but they did not work for the liberation of the lower castes from the oppressive social structure. Moreover, Tilak's endeavour to enthuse nationalism through *Ganpathi Ustav* (festival honouring Ganesh) and *Shivaji Jayanthi* (annual celebration of birth of Shivaji, the Marathi king) in course of time provided a platform for communal politics. These festivals also provided enough ammunition for contestation of local sacred spaces and led to violent communal riots between the Hindus and the Muslims.[28]

Aurobindo Ghosh, who actively participated in political activities of the freedom struggle, also associated religion with politics. He desired to found the nationalist movement on a spiritual basis. Lala Lajpat Rai, the extremist leader from Punjab, also sought support from Hinduism for the development of nationalism. He said that the Arya Samaj had developed in him a love for Hindu culture and Hindu nationality. Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal, both conceived of the nation as a radiant and luminous Mother, and they sought to evolve a spiritual, as distinct from a political and territorial nationalism. Thus, extremism may be said to have taken birth in political and national life due to the nineteenth century revival movement and or the social, political and religious awakening that took place during this period.

After 1905, i.e., with the partition of Bengal, the extremist movement became popular and powerful. Militant nationalism came to hold sway in the Indian political scene. Later, Hindu nationalists like Veer Damodar Savarkar and Dr. K.B. Hedgevar were inspired by the extremist movement led by Tilak. The Hindu nationalism is nothing but a child of the extremist movement led by Tilak, Aurobindo, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajat Rai.

Fourth Phase: V.D. Savarkar & Hindu *Mahasabha*

Fourth phase of the evolution of Hindu nationalism started with the emergence of the Hindu Mahasabha, especially under V.D. Savarkar. The ideal and ideology which Savarkar laid down and propagated was called the Hindu *Sanghatan* ideology or Hindu Nationalism. Savarkar gave the ideology a form and finally formulated and codified it into an integrated doctrine of social and political outlook on life. He wanted to reform Hinduism in order to strengthen it. He also campaigned for the reconversion into Hinduism of those who had been converted to other religions.

The Hindu Mahasabha

The reform of Hinduism likewise played a major role in the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha. The first Hindu Sabha was formed in Punjab as a cultural body in 1907, to be ardent and watchful to safeguard the interests of the entire Hindu community and took upon itself the task of organising an All-India Hindu Mahasabha. The first session of the new All-India Organisation met in 1915, under the leadership of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai. In the 1920s, the Mahasabha increasingly directed its activities against the Muslim League and the Muslim community.

In 1925, its programme was enunciated as follows by Lala Lajpat Rai, who was then President of Mahasabha:

- To organise Hindu Sabhas throughout the country,
- To provide relief to such Hindus who need help on account of communal riots,

- Re-conversion of Hindus who have been forcibly converted to Islam,
- To organise gymnasiums for the use of Hindu youngmen and women,
- To ogranise *seva samities,*
- To popularise Hindi,
- To request the Trustees and keepers of Hindu temples to allow halls attached to the temples for people to assemble and to discuss matters of social and religious interest,
- To celebrate Hindu Festivals,
- To promote good feelings with Muslims and Christians,
- To represent communal interests of the Hindus in all political controversies,
- To encourage Hindus to take to industrial pursuits,
- To better the condition of Hindu women.[29]

On the face value, the above stated objectives of the Hindu Mahasabha sound very liberal and its work constructive in nature. But in reality the sense of double dealing is consistent right form the beginning. On the one hand the Mahasabha talks of promoting good feeling among the different religious groups but on the other hand it projects itself as the agent who represents the interests of only the Hindu communal interests. It is also totally silent about the caste system and the evil practices of caste. Its interest is also highlighted by the fact that it encourages industrial pursuits but has nothing to say about the agricultural sector and agrarian reforms. Thus, once again the upper caste bias is clearly seen in its objectives and the way it has been in operation.

A much more important fact is that the Hindu Mahasabha, the forerunner of the Sangh Parivar, was founded with the stated objective to integrate the untouchables into Hindu fold with a view to dissuading them from converting to another religion. Interestingly, the Hindu Mahasabha also did not lag behind in passing resolutions like many social, political and religious bodies calling for untouchables to enjoy full access to roads, schools, wells and even temples. These reforms were introduced in resolutions in order to legitimize and justify the varna order.[30]

The Hindu Mahasabha was originally founded as a social, cultural and religious organisation and not as a political body. In his presidential address at the special session of the Maba Sabha held at Belgaum in 1924, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya argued that it was wrong to think that the Mahasabha was a communal organisation, which would clash with the nationalistic Congress. "The Congress was a political party and could not", Malaviya said, "deal with social and non-political matters, such as untouchability, inter-caste jealousies, child marriages and other social abuses. The Mahasabha would deal with these matters and also safeguard the interests of the Hindus."[31] But the socio-cultural role that Malaviya envisaged for the Mahasabha was soon superseded by its political role because the Sabha decided to participate in the elections in 1926. Thus, the Hindutva forces right from their inception had this dual nature inbuilt within them. On the one hand it wanted to be a social reform movement and on the other hand it could not resist temptation of political power and took part in the elections.

The outbreak of Hindu-Muslim riots that followed the suspension of the non-cooperation movement in 1922 provided an additional occasion for the establishment of Hindu Sabhas throughout the country. These riots were utilized by the Hindu Sabha leaders to focus on the general absence of a strong united body among the Hindus, which in turn provided an impetus to the Hindu unification movement. Thus the Mahasabha projected itself as the mouthpiece of the Hindus against the Muslims. This was also clearly seen when the Mahasabha severely condemned the Communal Award of 1932, which set up special electorate for Muslims and other communities. After 1932, the Mahasabha became increasingly estranged from the Congress party and from Mahatma Gandhi, whom they accused of appeasing the Muslims.

Throughout the early history of the Mahasabha, most of its leaders and members held dual membership in the Mahasabha and the Congress Party. Lala Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya, the two early Mahasabha leaders, had also been Presidents of Congress, the former in 1920 and the latter in 1909 and 1919. But in the latter part of 1930s, the Congress forbade dual membership. The question of dual membership became a historical trend with regard to the members of Sangh Parivar. The Janata Party which came into power in 1977 after dethroning Indira Gandhi, split into Janata Party and Bharatiya Janata Party because the erstwhile Jana Sangh members who got incorporated into Janata Party refused to give up their membership of Jana Sangh. The later avatar of Jana Sangh, the BJP members also have the dual membership one as BJP cadres and the other as RSS cadres.

The history of the Mahasabha can, in a general way, be divided into three periods, signifying the main targets of its work. Underlying all three periods has been a concern for the social reform of Hinduism. In the early period, sometime before World War the emphasis was on Hindu revivalism and hostility towards the Western impact. After the World War I, Maha Sabha activities were increasingly directed against the Muslim League. And, in 1930s, when V. D. Savarkar became President of the Mahasabha, its target was increasingly the Congress Party and the minorities. The Mahasabha was strongly opposed to the formation of Pakistan and the partition of India. The Mahasabha's antagonism started in the early thirties against the Congress for its policy of placating the Muslims at the expense the Hindus, reached its peak during the Savarkar era.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who succeeded Savarkar in 1943, was responsible for democratising and modernising the Mahasabha. After independence of the country in 1947, he exorted the Mahasabahites either to give up politics or to confine themselves to it so as to admit people of all communities and grow into a national organisation. His advice went unheeded, and in the upheaval that followed the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in January 1948, by a member of the Mahasabha, it renounced politics for some time and later returned to it in May 1949. Meanwhile, Mookerjee severed his relations with the Hindu Mahasabha and in

1951 took the initiative to form a new political party, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which in 1979 gave birth to the present BJP.

The Mahasabha, when it first began was an expression of reformist elements within the Hindu fold, but there were many orthodox Hindus who were dissatisfied with the relatively progressive attitudes of the Mahasabha on the question of social reform. The more orthodox members joined the Sanatana Dharma Sabha, which was created in 1895, as a defence of orthodox Hinduism against the criticisms of the Arya Samaj. And after the independence in 1949, some orthodox Hindus formed a new party of their own, called the Rama Rajya Parishad. It participated in the first three General elections, and in the 1967 elections the party did not participate. The Hindu Mahasabha, however, could not secure any important position in the political life of free India. In place of Hindu Mahasabha, the party which gained in strength was the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.[32]

Fifth Phase: The RSS, the BJS and the VHP

As stated above, the RSS has formed in 1925. It is claimed by the proponents of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh that Sangh is the ardent exponent of Hindu nationalism in modern India. In the initial stages it had two objectives: to unite Hindus to fight against the colonial rule, and (b) to organise Hindus against further disintegration and from the proselytising influence of Islam and Christianity. But, later it expanded its scope of activities into many other fields, such as politics, education, social welfare, trade union and intellectual activities. It is proclaimed by the supporters of the RSS that Hedgewar realised that national unity and organisation alone could transform a weak nation into a strong one. For creating a cadre of persons committed to national reconstruction, he launched the new Organisation. The aim of the RSS is to project itself as a model for a regenerated Hindu society. In 1987, it was estimated that there were 10,00,000 young Swayamsevaks or members.

Hedgewar, the founder of RSS did not believe in the separation of religion from politics. He declared: "We cannot give up religion in our national life as it would mean that we have turned faithless to our race-spirit, to the ideal and mission for which we have lived for ages." This is reminiscent of the ideas of some of the extremist leaders of the first decade of the twentieth century, who considered that no national awakening in India would be fruitful except on the foundation of religious faith.

Though the RSS is mentioned as a revivalist organisation by its critics, its leader asserts that RSS stands for the Hindu renaissance of the Hindu religion and the Hindu society. At present, the RSS has a leading position among various Hindu organisations in the country and represents the idea of *Hindu Rastra or* Hindu nationalism. The RSS is not a mere communal pressure group. It claims that it never demands any special right to Hindus. At the same time it is against giving any concession to other religious minority groups and it opposes religious discrimination. RSS does not directly participate in religious issues.[33] For this purpose, it has formed organizations like Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) to protect the interests of the Hindus and to interact with the Government.

RSS workers with the help of various religious leaders belonging to different sects and missions, launched the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in 1964. A senior RSS pracharak Shivram Shankar Apte was elected its first Organising Secretary. The aims of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad are: (a) to consolidate and strengthen Hindu society, (b) to protect and spread Hindu values, ethical and spiritual, and to make them relevant in contemporary society, and (c) to establish and strengthen the links among Hindus living in different countries.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has concentrated its resources since the early 1970 on northeastern part of India. It has established schools, orphanages, temples, etc. in an effort both to block the further expansion of Christianity and to enhance national identity. When the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy arose, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad claimed to protect the 'interest of Hinuds'.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad is involved not only in religious activities; many other social activities were taken up by the Parishad. In 1983, there were about 3,000 active units in the country, spread over 302 districts. The Parishad is not only protecting the interests of Hindus, but it also takes to the task of spreading Hinduism and arousing the Hindu spirit. It is reported that under the auspices of the Parishad, over 66,000 persons were reconverted to Hindu fold within three years, i.e., from 1982 to 1985. For arousing Hindu sentiments, in 1982 the Parishad organised *Ekatmata Yagna* (Integration effort) with 312 moving vehicles (yatras) carrying Bharatmata and Ganga Mata images (Mother India and Mother Ganga) and distributed 'Ganga Jal' (sacred water of river Ganga) to all parts of the country. In this effort, the Parishad got a contribution of nearly 4 crores of rupees from the people.

But if one looks at the historical growth of Vishwa Hindu Parishad one can not fail to see the fact that the evolution of VHP is directly linked with the process of reactivation of the majoritarian inferiority complex, namely the feeling that Christian proselytisation poses a threat to Hinduism and that close attention had to be given to imitating its techniques in order to better resist it. This could be seen in the writings of the *Organiser,* the party organ of the Sangh Parivar, "Catholicism is not merely a religion. It is a tremendous organisation allied with some foreign powers. The large scale conversion of tribal people in the industrial heartland of India [South Bihar] poses serious danger to future national security. Because the Catholic position is that in the case of conflict between their country and the Church, their first loyalty will always be to the Pope".[34] This is also a fact that the VHP appeared to be the effective agent of a Hindu instrumentalist strategy precisely because its religious network was a means by which a Hindu nationalist mobilization could be achieved. In 1966 the VHP was one of the protagonists in the campaign against cow slaughter, which the Jana Sangh tried to exploit politically in the run up to the February elections.[35]

Sixth Phase: The BJP and the RSS

The current phase of saffron wave can be stated as the coming of age of the political face of the Sangh Parivar, in the evolution of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh could not continue within the Janata Party after the 1980 general election debacle. Hence, the former Jana Sangh members formed Bharatiya Janata Party in April 1980. A.B. Vajpayee was elected as its President. The BJP adopted the five principles of Deendayal Upadyay.

They are: nationalism and national integration; democracy; positive secularism; Gandhian socialism; and value based politics.[36]

Thus two streams within the Sangh Parivar, one more towards political mobilization and participation in elections and the other more on the line of communal nationalism continued to exist within the saffron fold. It was never one working against the other, but both co-existing. The BJP with a more secular and tolerant face followed the political domain. But the VHP of the Sangh Parivar, on the other hand promptly responded to the new majoritarian, pro-Hindu signals from Congress, as well as to the signs of increasing cultural assertiveness of various minority groups.[37] Though at times there appear to be some conflict between these groups, they are resolved even before they surface. The Hindutva force, thus has been making steady progress with the spread and expansion of many frontal organizations and the policy that it follows. Its evolution with different frontal organizations is presented in Table 2.1.

The Historical Evolution of the RSS

Since the RSS is the base from which the various front organizations of the saffron brigade have emerged, it is important that we explore its genesis and evolution in detail. In the initial stage of its formation, the RSS was mostly confined to activities of daily *Shakhas* in the open grounds, training classes and camps at regular intervals and public meetings on certain occasions and festivals. It generally kept itself aloof from day-to-day political activities and did not involve in welfare operations. By the time India attained freedom, RSS had established itself as a powerful organization with a well developed ideology. The riots that broke out during the partition in 1947 provided it with a golden opportunity to enter into relief operations. This also contributed a new and respectable face for the RSS and less in nature of para-military organization. But one should not be deceived by the statement that 'the RSS became less of a para-military outfit'. Because, though it engaged in various relief and social welfare measures, its anti-Dalit, anti-Tribal, anti-women and anti-minority ideology and operations did not come to an end. On the other hand, its negative role increased as it tried to penetrate into the already established social service sectors of the minority communities.

Table 2.1: Sangh Parivar

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch had launched the anti-MNC drive in 1994. The BJP General Secretary K.N.Govindacharya was the brain behind this forum.

The Bajrang Dal, a militant wing was established by the VHP in May-June 1984. Bajrang denotes strong and sturdy and personified in Hanuman. BD was given birth in the struggle to liberate the site at Ayodhya.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad was established in 1964 under the auspices of RSS as a reaction to the activities of the Christian missionaries. The immediate cause of its launching was the granting of statehood to Christian-majority Nagaland.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh [Indian People's Union] was born in 1951 and it was an outcome of the post-independence communal strife. On the one hand it wanted to take care of the refugees and on the other hand to oppose the Congress ideology.

In July 1948, Madhok, a teacher who argued for the infiltration of the student organization founded the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad. Aim was to bring together all those who are involved in university education.

The Hindu Jagarn Manch is the post-Babri Masjid demolition factor [1992]. Like the Bajrang Dal in UP, the HJM in Gujarat uses the BJP govt. to work for building the temple and to attack minorities and to restructure educational and research institutions.

In April 1980 the BJS was renamed as the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Indian People's Party. The change of name was to indicate the political reorientation of the party. The word "Sangh" being common to both the BJS and the RSS, it was considered as a liability, although the members were permitted to have connection with the RSS.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Labourers) was established in July 1955, declared communism to be 'enemy number one'. This was due to the fear that the communists scheme of class struggle would divide Hindu society.

Influenced by Savarkar's theory of Hindutva K.B. Hedgewar established Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh that is RSS = the National Volunteer Force in 1925 with the express mission to organize the Hindus on nationalistic lines.

The Sangh Parivar

All organizations that swear in the name of Hindu nation put together, namely RSS, BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena.

The Hindu Mahasabha

The Hindu Mahasabha was launched in 1922 to operate as a pressure group within the Congress. To organize Hindu Sabhas through out the country. To reconvert Hindus converted to Islam. To open gymnasium to the youth.

Going further, one also becomes acutely aware of the fact that it is the personal involvement of Golwalkar, the second Sarsanghchalak, in the late 1952 agitation against the cow slaughter that gave the RSS a chance to influence the Hindu religious feelings as well as to build up its popular support. The RSS carried out a signature campaign and finally submitted it to the President.[38] This act in a way gave a sense of being a mass organization. It is from here the Sangh attempted to build up its image of being the sole champion of the Hindu interests.

The RSS could be assessed from four different angles: 1) Political Actor, 2) Pressure Group, 3) Religious Revivalist Group, 4) Social Service Agent (Appendix I). To comprehend the emergence and the ascent of RSS in its various *avatars* it is expedient to look at each of them briefly.

1) RSS: A Political Actor

When the BJP government in Gujarat left the doors wide open for the government officials to become members of RSS, a hue and cry was raised from various quarters. This ultimately forced the state government to backtrack from its proposed plan. Though the plan was withdrawn, this issue generated debate about the nature and the objectives of RSS.

The RSS continues to claim that it is only a cultural organization with the exclusive objective to propagate and uphold Indian culture and religious traditions. But this claim has been broken as a rule than an exception, since the RSS has been taking part in various socio-political activities. Article 4 of the RSS Constitution declares that the RSS does not have any political ambitions. On face value, this claim seems to be correct. But the very Article 4 also states that the RSS members are free to join any political party, except those that are violent and secretive in nature. This once again belies the truth. Historical data abound with facts that the RSS was in the forefront in most of the communal riots. But a much more important fact is that it is the RSS members who have been appointed to build up the newly constituted front organizations like the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the BJP.

Another claim that RSS stakes is that its founding members and cadres have actively participated in the independence struggle. This contention also has been seriously and systematically challenged by intellectuals, academicians and conscious citizens in general. For instance, it is claimed by the supporters and the admirers of RSS that Hedgewar, the founder of RSS was a freedom fighter. There is evidence that he went to jail for the first time for giving an inflammatory speech in support of the Khilafat Movement (1920-21). He was subsequently sent to one year's rigorous imprisonment. But in 1925, when he was influenced by Hindutva, he left his earlier path and founded the RSS. After five years, that is, in 1930, when Mahatma Gandhi had launched Salt *satyagraha* undertaking Dandi *yatra*, Hedgewar sent a circular to all the members of RSS that the Sangh will not participate in the Satyagraha. But he also declared that individuals would not be prohibited from joining the Dandi march. But in such a condition, most of the members could not participate in the protest.[39]

Interestingly, Hedgewar himself participated in the Dandi March and went to jail. It is alleged that he did so, with the intention of influencing the Congress cadres with the RSS ideology. Knowing the evil designs of the RSS, it is reported that the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution forbidding its members from becoming members of RSS, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Muslim League.[40] Here it may be mentioned in passing that the present BJP government issued a commemorative postage stamp to mark the 110th birth anniversary of 'freedom fighter' and founder of the RSS on March 18th, 1999 in New Delhi. By this act the government has not only given the title of 'freedom fighter' to a person who in more than one sense did not approve the collective fight for freedom by both the Hindus and Muslims. He also considered the Muslims to be an immediate enemy than the colonial rulers. But a much more serious matter is that by its act the BJP government has given a credible space for the RSS in the Indian polity and society.

As stated above the RSS continued to claim that it is a cultural organization and not a political outfit. But there are many forceful arguments against this claim. Right from the founding of the RSS it had a close network with the Hindu Mahasabha. Further, these organizations were similar in ideologies, both advocated Hindu Rashtra and hence political in nature. In 1948, once again there was strong current within the RSS, if it is not high time that it should enter into political arena. This debate was necessitated by the ban on RSS after the assassination of Gandhi. Hence, some of its members felt that if they had presence in the parliament it would not have been possible for the government to ban the Sangh. But the RSS need not worry, since Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, who resigned from Nehru's cabinet founded the Jana Sangh. The RSS cadres formed the base of the new political outfit.

It is not only that the most of the members had dual membership. But even the ideology of both the organizations were very similar. But there was one basic difference between the two organizations. Whereas any citizen of India could become a member of Jana Sangh, only Hindus could join the RSS as stipulated in its constitution. This clearly indicates the communal nature of the RSS. Even BJP has been a party of the upper caste Banias and the Brahmins. There have been members like George Menezes and the present Minister of Food Processing Shahnawaz and Sikandar Bhakt from the minority communities in the political outfit, the BJP. But their place is maintained in BJP as 'show piece' to appease and to attract the minority vote bank.

Down the history, in 1977, the members of RSS took active part in the general elections under the banner of Janata Party to defeat Indira Gandhi. But once the Janata Party came to power, the question of dual membership arose once again. This is because, the members of RSS continued to be members of RSS as well as the Janata Party. Many of them were cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament. This with other internal contradictions of Janata Party led to the ruin of Janata government and brought Indira Gandhi back to power.

Added to the above mentioned facts, issues like the Punjab problem, ousting the foreigners from Assam, the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the riots that followed in different places provided fertile ground for the RSS to emerge as a political agent. Thus from 1980 onwards, the RSS came to play an important rôle as a political agent within the communal politics of India. It is this development that has given a serious basis for communal crisis and conflicts in Indian society and state.

Taken together, the RSS leadership had an ambivalent attitude regarding party politics in independent India. Some of the members of RSS wanted to keep away from politics due to corruption, caste consideration etc. But the activist *pracharaks* were demanding some RSS involvement in politics. Many of the leadership sought some voice without institutionalizing any formal linkage between the RSS and the Jana Sangh. The RSS constitution prohibited political activity, and the government might again restrict RSS activities if it were engaged in overt political activity. The problem was resolved by the decision to loan a number of pracharks to the Jana Sangh.[41] It is these pracharaks who provided the basis for the organizational and mobilizational structure of the BJS. Even today, there exists ideological, organizational and structural relationship between these two organizations.

2) RSS: A Pressure Group/ Agency for the Aggregation of Public Opinion

The RSS and its exponents claim that the Sangh is a non-political organization, and they are only engaged in affecting the polity of society. But reading the various historical material one comes to realize that though the RSS is not a political party *per se*, it has always tried to exert political pressure on the government without entering into the corridors of power. In this regard it is also a social fact that since the RSS is a communal organization it exerts pressure on the government keeping in mind the interests of its communal population. But one should immediately make a subtle difference that exists in this claim too. It is the Sangh that claims that it is the sole representative of the Hindu community, or it is the only organization that can protect the interests of the Hindu community. But how tenable is this claim is a question that needs to be tested in the ground reality. Historical evidences reject the claim of the RSS. For example, the Sangh parivar geared all its energy to demolish the Babri masjid, with the hidden motive to emerge as the sole representative of the Hindu community. But its claim to be the agent of the Hindu fold was rejected in the heartland of the Hindi belt, that is, in Uttar Pradesh.

From being a cultural and religious organization, the Sangh shifted to non-religious arena during the initial phase of the Sangh itself. Golwalkar had declared, " To work merely with a view to counteracting communism is always dangerous. It is only the inculcation of a right and positive faith that can make the masses rise above the base appeal of communism".[42] The RSS was extremely disturbed by the growing influence of communism among the students and labouring class. Hence, it wanted to arrest this influence and exert its own influence on this segment of the population. As shown in Table 2.1, it started a student's wing named Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad (ABVP) in 1948. Significantly, this exercise was carried out when the RSS was banned from political participation.

The ABVP grew from one programme to another and by 1970 it became a significant force in many of the university campuses. It also played an important role in the Gujarat and Bihar agitation in 1974-75, under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan with a view to dethroning the Congress government. But when it came to work for 'Total Revolution' that Jayaprakash had proposed they were back to their university politics. The ABVP is not affiliated to the BJP, the political wing of the Sangh Parivar. But it is directly controlled by the RSS. Hence, the RSS pracharakhs are deputed to work as the main force of ABVP. ABVP is the second largest student's organization in the country second only to the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), affiliated to the Congress party. Once again one becomes aware of the fact that though the Sangh Parivar claims that it is not political in nature, yet through the ABVP cadres it trains its future political leaders.

While the ABVP was aimed at working with the university students, the RSS started Vidhya Bharati in 1977 to influence the minds of the school children. At that time, there were 650 schools spread out in 15 states with 6,500 *acharyas* or teachers. But at present, there are about 17 lakh students in 13 thousand educational institutions with about 73 thousand teachers. It is these educational institutions which become the training ground for demolition squads like the kar sevaks, the political leaders for the future and pracharks for carrying the ideology of the saffron brotherhood.

Another major attempt made by the RSS to exert political pressure without becoming a political party is by the creation of the **Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh** (BMS) on 23rd July 1955. Though the BMS is a trade union like any other but there are some fundamental differences between them. The RSS once again claims that the BMS is not affiliated to any political party like the other trade unions. But this claim is disproved by the fact that the Sangh Parivar created this union to put political pressure. One also needs to look at some of the fundamental differences between the other trade unions and the BMS.

Right from its formation, the BMS had this ideology in mind, that is, the BMS will keep the welfare of the labourers foremost in mind. But above this it will work for establishing Hindu culture and Hindu nationalism. Above all it denies and decries the fact of class conflict and upholds the harmonising principle of industrial families. Hence, by its very nature the Sangh Parivar is to maintain compromise so that it can carry out its agenda of Hindu nationalism. Following from this, it has demanded the recognition of *Vishwakarma* day as the National Labour Day, and rejected the May Day celebrations. Thus, it is narrowed down in its approach to be part of the universal labour unity. In the 11th convention held in Bhopal in 1996, it had membership over 47,18,831.

The Sangh Parivar also founded the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS). In March 1979 over 550 peasants assembled at Kota, Rajasthan and worked out the modalities of the BKS. Significantly, it is the landed gentry who have taken control of this organization.

The RSS sponsored media play an important role in strengthening the organization as well as spreading its ideology. But in its formative stage, the RSS did not publish any newspapers or journals, and it had neither a written constitution nor a set of written rules. When the Central Provinces government issued a memorandum in December 1933, charging that the RSS was a communal organization and government employees were prohibited from joining, Hedgewar refused to issue a protest but requested sympathetic organizations to protest on its behalf. The activist pracharaks proposed that the RSS use the print media to publicize its position on the question of partition, and on how the Hindus should respond to communal tension. While, the leadership refused to sanction the establishment of RSS newspapers and journals, they consented to the creation of a trust. The trust raised approximately 400,000 rupees and it began to publish **Organiser,** an English weekly on July 3 1947 from Delhi.

Over the years, the RSS has established its own party organs in most of the major Indian languages and in English [see Appendix II]. In the beginning, the RSS was reluctant to enter into the print media. As stated above, the first attempt to enter into the print media was started in 1946, when the RSS founded the Bharat Prakashan Trust in Delhi. Two important facts need to be culled out from this data. Firstly, choosing Delhi to be the base for publication clearly indicates the intention of the RSS. It wants to operate form the nerve-centre of the country. Secondly, even before independence its print media was in operation. These two facts highlight the truth that the RSS has been going about systematically to spread its wings.

The RSS activists were responsible for forming the Hindustan Samachar, India's first vernacular language news service. In 1970, with a network of over 1,000 correspondents and 24 news centres, it distributed news to newspapers and journals publishing 9 vernacular languages. Among its reliable customers were the 41 RSS affiliated newspapers and journals [For details see Appendix II]. During the 1975-77 Emergency, the RSS affiliated print media tried to protect itself from government retaliation by strictly following censorship guidelines. In some cases, they even published laudatory pro-government articles. Nonetheless, the government did close several RSS affiliated newspapers and journals, including *Organiser* and *Motherland*.[43]

After the ban on RSS in 1948, its Swayamsevaks started two vernacular weeklies, namely, *panchajanya* in Hindi and *Rastra Sakti* in Marathti. Thus, the Sangh was able to carry on its ideology propagation even while the organization remained banned by the government. Similarly right from 1947, the Sangh started various publication units spread all over the country. By utilising the media to its full capacity, the RSS has been successful in creating, mobilising and directing the public opinion to its advantage.

Women have been one of the segments of the population that the saffron brigade tried to mobilize right from the beginning. Interestingly, each front organizations of the Hindutva force have their own **women's wing** [See Table 2.2]. Though most of them claim to be cultural and religious in principle yet they involve in political issues in a massive way. The Durga Vahini (Durga's Battalion) founded in 1990, mobilizes the middle class women for *kirtans* during ordinary times and during the elections it motivates the middle class women to come out and vote for the BJP candidates. This has paid rich dividends to the Sangh Parivar.

Table 2.2 : Sangh Parivar and Women's Front

Women's wing	Parent Body	Year formed
Rashtriya Sevika Sangh	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh	1936
Mahila Morcha	Bharatiya Janata Party	1980
Durga Vahini	Vishwa Hindu Parishad	1990
Mahila Agadi	Shiv Sena	NA

[Source: Collected from various books]

It is claimed by the saffron brigade that the Sevika Sangh is founded as a character building organization for women. The activities are similar to that of RSS: physical training, including marital exercises at shakhas separate from those of the men; *samskaras*, that is, moral teachings of the duties and obligations of women; and *bhaudik* sessions inculcating Hindu nationalist ideology in the volunteers, the *rashtrasevikas*.[44] But a fundamental difference is maintained between the *Swayamsevak* and *Sevika Sangh*. Paola Bachetta observes that this term leaves out the *swayam* (self) of the male *swayamsevak* because unlike the men of the RSS, who are seen as unitary, mono-gendered selves capable of heroic deeds, female selves are construed as relational.[45] Interestingly, the sevikas use the same *bhagwa dhwaj* (saffron flag), celebrating the same festivals and following the same calendar. But in all other matters the sevikas sangh has operated only as an appendix.

Some of the salient features of these women's fronts need a brief examination. Though the men's forums were founded early, it took almost a decade to form women's organizations. There is an attempt to provide physical training and martial arts etc, to women, yet these are done with the stated objective to make women strong for the nation. Their personal, family and societal life is not taken into account. Often their communal life is underpinned and they are prepared to face the enemy community. Further, many of these fronts as well as the Bajrang Dal etc came into existence with the Ramjanmabhumi issue. Above all, there is an inherent biased thought pattern within the Sangh Parivar about the various categories of women. The saffron brigade promotes the idea that the middle class, high caste women should be controlled primarily through morality and ideology, the lower-caste women can be controlled and disciplined primarily through physical exercise.[46]

3. RSS: A Religious Interest Group

The RSS projects itself as a religious interest group. Its members also claim that the Sangh prefers consensus to conflict. It further asserts that by establishing consensus, it wants to modernize Hinduism and the Hindu society. But in reality the RSS is a communal pressure group. This is because the Sangh makes all-out attempts to project this image that it promotes the interest of the Hindu community. But in course of this it fails to recognize or refuses to accept the fact that its activities are detrimental to the society and nation as a whole.

Table 2.3 : RSS : A Religious Interest Group

Religious
Vishwa Hindu Parishad
Vishal Hindu Sammelan
Virat Hindu Samaj
Hindu Samajotsav

Religious-Political
Hindu Front
Hindu Manch
Hindu Jagarana Vedika

1. Marga Darshaka Mandal
   (Organisation of Sanyasins)
2. Dharama Samsad
   (A council of the Chief of Hindu Mathas)
3. Mathru Mandal (Mothers' Forum)
4. Dharama Prasan (For re-conversion)
5. Yuva Vahini (Youth front)
6. Bala Sanskar Kendra (for children)
7. Seva Bhibhag (service division)

[Source : K. Jayaprasad. *RSS and Hindu Nationalism*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1991, p 95.]

As shown in Table 2.3 the RSS has built up various religious interest groups within its fold. The most powerful and vicious among them all is the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the VHP was launched in 1964. The Swayamsevaks in collaboration with various religious leaders belonging to different sects and missions founded it. One of the senior most pracharaks, Shivram Shankar Apte was deputed to be its organising secretary. The aims and the objectives of the VHP are : 1) to consolidate and strengthen the Hindu society; 2) to protect and spread Hindu values, ethical and spiritual and to make them relevant in contemporary society; 3) to establish and strengthen the links among Hindus living in different countries.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has tried to present itself as an all-India phenomenon. As early as 1983, the Parishad claimed that that it had formed 3,000 active units all over India spread over 302 districts. But what is the outcome of this vast network is clear from this data. It is reported that under the auspices of the Parishad, over 66,000 persons were reconverted to Hindu fold within a span of three years from 1982-1985.[47] But the neither the Vishwa Hindu Parishad nor the Sangh Parivar could claim to have raised even 600 hundred people from below poverty line. Keeping with its communal objectives, the VHP has been able to arouse 'Hindu sentiment' by organising *Ekatmata Yagna* (integration efforts) in 1982 with 312 moving *yatras*, that is, vehicles carrying Bharatmatha and Ganga Mata images and distributing 'Ganga jal' to people, in turn over 4 crores of rupees. Where does this money go? How is it spent? Does one know?

The RSS has also formed many forums to fight for the cause of Hindus. The *Tamil Munnani* or the Hindu Front in Tamil Naud and Hindu Front in Kerala, Vishal Hindu Sammelan, Hindu Manch, Hindu Jagarana Vedika, etc., were some of the earlier organisations. Some of these organisations even participate the elections. By founding the *Hindu Munnani* or the Hindu Front, it has tried to establish its base in the Dravidian region too.

There is a much deeper phenomenon which is overlooked at times. The RSS works through multiple layers of symbolic integration, with each symbol given a specific valorization by its ideological construction. The most important is the *bhagwa dhwaj*, the saffron flag, which is considered an age-old symbol. The flag came to be worshipped as a living guru. But today the saffron colour and the saffron flag have become the symbol of Hindu nationalists. During riots, that saffron flag is often employed to mark Hindu areas, and it is planted upon Muslim dargahs (tombs) and mosques to mark Hindu superiority.[48] This was the case, when the demolition squad, first stormed the Babri Masjid in 1991.

4. RSS: An Agency for Social Service

The Sangh Parivar which considers itself as the natural champion of Hindu nationalism and Hindu unity, has also projected itself to be an agent for social services and nation building. During natural and man made calamities and during the time of riots, external invasion etc., the RSS and its front organizations have rendered service to the victims. But if one gleans through the historical data one realizes the fact that its operations are communal in nature. For example, during the partition in 1947, when the refugees were coming from Pakistan it set up a *Hindu Sahayatha Samiti* in Delhi[49] even though at that time Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were the victims. But by exclusively doing relief work among the Hindus it has heightened the tension that exists between the two communities.

As shown in Table 2.4, the Sangh Parivar has spread its entire activities in four different domains. The Sangh is an educational agent and is engaged in social work. It is also involved in Tribal welfare and development and finally engaged in intellectual and cultural aspects of social and national life. In short the Sangh Parivar has entered into some of the important service sectors. The educational activities of the Sangh as stated above has spread far and wide in the last few decades. To coordinate all these attempts, the *Akhil Bharatiya Rashtirya Shaikshanik Mahasangh* was started in 1992. This educational organization has its presence in 16 states spread out in 26 educational organizations with a membership of 7 lakhs.[50] Though the RSS wanted to keep away form the print media in its original avatar, now it is engaged in a big way in the publication of school text books.

Another area in which the RSS is systematically spreading its wings is among the Tribal and the Dalits. By starting *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* and Vivekananda Medical Mission it has tried to enter in a planned manner amidst these two exploited communities. In 1977 Tribal activities were brought under the *Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram.* This is mostly operative in the Jharkhand and the northeast. Once again the track record of the Sangh is not very good with these oppressed communities. Since the social base of the Sangh Parivar is mainly drawn from the upper castes, it is natural that even well meaning persons doubt the intentions of the RSS. The usual derogative and condescending attitude continues to be operative among the members.

Moreover, the very derogative name, *vanvasi* is indicative of the status and esteem the Sangh Parivar is ready to share with the Tribal people. It is being perceived by the people from these communities that the efforts of RSS are to stifle the assertions that are erupting at various levels and places from these communities. They are also aware of the fact that the Sangh Parivar has coopted some

Table 2.4 : RSS As an Agency for Social Service and Nation-Building

Service to the Nation	Service to the People
Service in Kashmir during Pakistan supported Insurrection in October 1947. Support to the Governmental Agencies during Chiness invasion in 1962, in Indo-Pak wars in 1965 and in 1971. Participation in Goa in 1984 Liberation Movement 1955	Relief Camps to the Refugees from Pakistan in 1947 and to the Refugees from East Bengal in 1950. Relief works in Assam Earthquake in 1950, in Punjab Flood in 1955, Andhra Cyclone in 1977, Morvi Dam Disaster in 1979, Bhopal Gas tragedy in 1984, To the Sikhs in Delhi riots.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Education	Social Service	Tribal Welfare	Intellectual/ Cultural
1. Vidya Bharati	1. Seva Bharati	1.Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram	1. Deen Dayal Research Institute
2. Bharatiya Shishi Mandal	2. Grahak Panchayat	2. Indian Tribal Cultural Forum	2. Sanskar Bharati
3. Vishawa Sanskaritha Prathisthan	3. Vivekananda Medical Mission		3.Bharatiya Vichar Kendra
4.Vivekananda Kendra	4. Bharatiya Kushta Nivarak		4. Tapasya
5. Bharatiya Vidya Niketan			5. Bharatiya Ithihas Sankalan Yojana
			6.Yogashema
			7. Mandan
			8. Pranja Bharati

[Source : K. Jayaprasad. RSS and Hindu Nationalism. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1991, p 99.]

of its leaders so as to project the image that it is not averse to establishing a dialogue with the Dalits and the Tribals. What is its real intent is explained in detail in the following chapter.

The Sangh has also formed cultural organizations for the spread of its ideology. It established in 1972 in Delhi, the Deen Dayal Research Institute. It also comes out with a quarterly journal named *Manthan*. The RSS has also started an organization to 'Collect the Historical Traditions of Bharatiya". This institute which began in 1973 tries to collect material about the ancient history of India. The saffron brigade wants to service the dead language, Sanskrit. Hence it flouted an organization called 'Sanskrit Bharati' in February 1996 in Delhi.[51] By now the Sanskrit Bharati has published 50 books. This once again exposes the Brahminical superiority bias towards the other languages and dialects. While there many regional languages like Bhojpuri, Magahi, and other Tribal languages languish due to lack of funds, a dead language and a language which is the symbol of the upper caste Brahminical dominance has been given a moral boost by the Sangh Parivar. This is a clear indication of the real intention of the saffron society.

There are two more areas of the Sangh Parivar that need some examination for further understanding of the upsurge of the saffron brigade. One is the RSS prayer and the other is the organizational structure of the RSS. On the face value the RSS prayer is envisaged to inculcate a sense of reverence and respect for the motherland. But this is not the bone of contention. But this reverence has a sense of communal feeling, since the prayer calls upon only the Hindus. Also it has surely brought happiness to all the citizens of India but has been appropriated by only a few of the Brahminical social order. The prayer calls for heroism but nothing about equality and common good.

RSS Prayer[52]

Forever I bow to thee, O loving Motherland ! O Motherland of us Hindus, thou has brought me up in happiness. May my life, O great and blessed Holy Land, be laid down in thy cause. I bow to thee, again and again.

We the children of the Hindu Nation, bow to thee in reverence, O Almighty God. We have girded up our loins to carry on thy work. Give us Thy holy blessings for its fulfillment. O Lord ! Grant us such might as no power on earth can ever challenge, such purity of character as would command the respect of the whole world and such knowledge as would make easy the thorny path that we have voluntarily chosen.

May we be inspired with the spirit of stern heroism, which is the sole and ultimate means of attaining the highest spiritual bliss

with the greatest temporal prosperity. May intense and everlasting devotion to our ideal ever inspire our hearts. May our victorious organised power of action, by Thy Grace, fully protect our dharma and lead this nation of ours to the highest pinnacle of glory.

VICTORY TO MOTHER INDIA!

[Translated from Hindi]

The Organizational Structure of the RSS

The organizational structure of the RSS provides it the mobilizational capability. The entire edifice of the saffron brigade is well planned [See Appendix IV]. It is due to this the Sangh Parivar has been able to withstand pressure and carry out its objectives. It is not a mean achievement for an organization to grow and expand in such a short time. But on the other hand the real face of the RSS in particular and the Sangh Parivar in general belies any attempt by the RSS and its supporters that it is a cultural organization and non-political organization. Moreover, the fascist principles of the saffron wave are not today's phenomenon. Right form its inception, the Sangh had integrated into itself the fascist policies.

Marzia Casolari in the article "Hindutva's Foreign Tie-up in the 1930s : Archival Evidence" tries to spell out the domestic roots of the Hindu fascism as well as its foreign connections. In this article it is demonstrated that there was interaction between the Hindu fascism and the Italian fascism. This probably inspired B.S. Moonje, a Maharshtrian Brahmin to make a trip in 1931 to Italy. After this trip Moonje tried to transfer fascist models to Hindu society and to organize it militarily, according to fascist patterns.[53] There seems to be an enormous admiration for authoritarian leadership among the Hindu nationalist leaders. On the one hand, the saffron battalion talks of nationalism and speaks against imperialism and on the other hand it had made ideological alliance with the fascist forces.

Marzia goes on to demonstrate that in the initial phase of RSS itself there was serious apprehensions about the very existence of the Sangh. He provides historical records to state how the Congress had perceived the presence of RSS in suspicion. In the year 1948 itself when the RSS was banned for its communal activities and for the assassination of Gandhi, a report was circulated within the Congress about the RSS. Some portion of that report is given below:

"1) Started in Nagpur some sort of Hindu Boys Scout movement. Gradually it developed into a communal militarist organization with violent clashes.

2) The RSS has been purely a Maharashtrian Brahmin organization. The non-Brahmin Maharashtrians who constitute the bulk of Congress party have no sympathy with it.

3) Even in the other provinces the chief organizers and wholetime workers will be found to be inevitably Maharashtrian Brahmins.

4) The RSS practices secret and violent methods which promote 'fascism'. No regard is paid to truthful means and constitutional methods.

5) There is no constitution of the organization; its aims and objectives have never been clearly defined. The general public is usually told that its aim is only physical training, but the real aims are not conveyed even to the rank and file of the RSS members. Only its 'inner circle' is taken into confidence. [After the ban was imposed on the RSS, the RSS pleaded its case and agreed to formulate a constitution. The constitution is presented in the above pages]

7) There are no records or proceedings of the RSS organization. It also does not maintain the membership registers. There are also no records of its income and expenditure. The RSS is thus, strictly secret as regards its organization".[54]

From the above report it becomes clear that though the Hindu nationalists propagated nationalist sentiments they followed secret and violent methods. It also makes it evident that the organization was predominantly of the Brahmins.

The author further establishes that from 1924 to 1935 *Kesari* published editorials and articles about Italy, fascism and Mussolini. The fascism of Italy and the Nazism of Germany became the guiding force of the Hindu nationalist forces. In this regard nationalism meant to militarise Hindu society and to create a militant mentality among the Hindus. This was not done to work for the all round progress of the country but to take on the 'enemy'. In the process, the continuous reference to German racial policy and the comparison of the Jewish problem in Germany with the Muslim question (read as Christian question, may be as Sikh question) in India reveals the evolution of the concept of 'internal enemy' along explicitly fascist lines.[55] It is this phenomenon that ultimately colours the Sangh Parivar's ideology.

A Shift in Strategy

As stated above, the Sangh Parivar right from its conception kept a distance from active politics. Yet the activist pracharaks engaged themselves in political mobilization and even electoral politics. But the hurried formation and the disintegration in 1980 of the Janata Party once again generated a debate among the Sangh members about political activities. The 'Janata Experiment' on the one hand brought some of them closer to the corridors of power but it also raised questions about its utility in terms of mobilising the Hindu fold. Hence, the Sangh Parivar decided to experiment with other affiliates like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad from 1980 onwards.[56] Thus the focus of the RSS from open to hidden agenda shifts from the 1980s.

A few issues provided enough scope for the RSS to shift its focus from overtly political activities to covertly political mobilization. In 1982 the conversion of some lower caste members from Hinduism to Islam in Meenakshipuram forced the RSS to dispatch VHP members to counter this move. This not only put an end to any other threat of this type but also gave a foothold to the saffron battalion in the southern part of the country to an organization which was till now considered as the 'cow belt party'. The saffron fold supported the VHP's fund raising drive, its Ekatmata Yatra (unity pilgrimage) campaign, its effort to unify the Hindu religious establishment, and its social welfare activities aimed at insulating vulnerable groups from conversion. In Assam, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidya Parishad participated in a powerful way in the anti-foreigner agitation. Once again in Punjab, the RSS itself took the lead in trying to diffuse Hindu-Sikh communal tensions, sending pracharaks from all over the country to the state.[57]

Even in 1984, when Punjab was wounded with the Operation Blue Star and the enormous humiliation, alienation and violence the Sikh community suffered after the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, it is the saffron brigade which moved into Punjab and formed the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat (RSS). Once again the nomenclature indicates the attempt by the Sangh to make it appear to the Sikhs that they have a common identity. In addressing all these issues, the Sangh Parivar built its fronts like the VHP and the Bajrang Dal.

In addition to the above mentioned reasons, there was another reason why the RSS moved away from BJP after the 1980 experiment. The RSS was not sure of the electoral success of the BJP. Also, the Sangh did not want to be identified with one political party and lose its opportunity to relate with other parties or to use them on its behalf when faced with problems. Hedgewar himself was aware of this fact. But with most of the activist *pracharaks* wanting to be involved even in latent form, the RSS leadership could not avoid a close interface with these two organizations. The BJP on the other hand can not move away from the RSS, since most of its cadres are drawn from the RSS. Within the party's organizational structure, the cadres has been reluctant to share power with politically prominent figures from non-RSS background who could mobilize mass support for the party.[58]

This duality of relationship has coloured the interaction between the RSS and its political front the BJP. Especially from the time the BJP came to power at the centre, the point of unity and differences have been sharpened. A careful observe also can perceive that at times the differences come to the fore strongly. But since there is a basic sense of forming one mission, these differences are resolved and interaction continues as if nothing has happened. This is a baffling phenomenon for the common Indian.

More significant than this reality is the fact that there has been a change in the relationship between these two saffron organizations. Hansen is of the view that 'the transformation of the RSS's relation to the BJP from one of authority to one of competition has been compounded by the de facto move of the RSS headquarters to Delhi – the city of power and politicking - where the former RSS Sarsangchalak Rajendra Singh spent most of his time and from where he made most of his public statements. The long standing representation of the RSS leadership as elderly, quasi-saintly authorities residing in Nagpur, in the centre of India, representing the Sangha and "Hindu society" versus the impurities of politics of Delhi, has simply crumbled. In the past, the BJP leadership used to go to Nagpur to 'seek guidance'. But now once the BJP is in the saddle, the RSS has gone public on many issues. Interestingly, the Shankersinh Waghela- Kesubhai Patel tussle for leadership in Gujarat government, once again brought to the fore the crucial issue if the RSS should have a decisive say in nominations for posts and tickets within the BJP.[59] In spite of all these pull and push that goes on between the RSS and the BJP, the heart of the matter is that both are very much part of the Sangh Parivar and both are two faces of the forces that are working over time for the saffronization of Indian society and state.

In summary it can be stated that the Hindutva project has three essential characteristics of all its past manipulations. 1) It is **hegemonic** in the sense that it seeks to create a political constituency. The aim behind the building up of this constituency is that this can be regularly mobilized into an ongoing structure of support for electoral and other political activities. Those who are consciously engaged in the political project of Hindutva, the leaders of BJP in particular know that the managing institutions of the global economy will actively cooperate with the Hindu nation if and only if it fulfils some basic requirements.

2) The second feature is **homogenizing**. The political community that emerged under Gandhiji and nurtured by Nehru had taken into account the enormous diversity of the emerging nation. But this was challenged by the majoritarian Hindu construct. The colonial rulers nurtured all of these as politically 'equal' interest groups. But from 1980s onwards there has been an attempt by the Hindutva forces to create a new hegemony. It aims at a national consensus based on a homogenized Hindu identity. This is similar to the earlier

project of brahminization, that is, of homogenising the diverse, creative and critical impulses in the Indian tradition.

3) Thirdly, the Hindutva forces have followed the **pedagogy of recapturing** and releasing the power of symbols and deities that have lived this dual, pan-Indian and local existence in the memories and aspirations of the people. This fabrication is aimed at bringing in an illusion of security and trust and a sense of historically persistent solidarity, into a world that is increasingly characterised by anxiety, uncertainty and disorder. The selection and the use of these symbols, events and actors are also associated with pedagogic violence.[60]

An additional social fact also needs to be laid bare here. The emergence of the RSS and the ascent of BJP have their origin in the rise of Brahminism. The once socially, politically and economically powerful Brahmin fold was losing out to other caste groups. They not only performed the typically mental jobs for the rulers in the past, they engaged in martial functions when necessary. But slowly they realized that their fortunes are on the decline. Gandhi's political mobilization too threatened the Brahminical values. In the western part of the country that Marathas and Gujarati Banias were gaining upper hand and the Brahmins were losing out to these socially mobile castes.[61] Hence, the Brahminical social fold immediately sprang into action and formed the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The venom with which the Sangh Parivar attacks the Dalits, Tribals, women, backward castes and the minorities is a clear indication of the 'threat' envisaged from these castes and communities who are resisting subjugation by the upper caste forces and revolting against Brahminical superiority. It is the struggle between the Brahminical forces under the disguise of Hindu nationalism on the one hand and the dream for a egalitarian, pluralistic and democratic Indian state and society on the other hand that will determine the direction and the destiny of Indian state and society.

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One side-issue of the Muslim religious aggression, which caused a continuous drain on the numerical superiority of the Hindus was the diabolic Muslim faith that it was a religious duty of every Muslim to kidnap and force into their own religion non-Muslim women. This incited their sensuality and lust for carnage and, while it enormously increased their number, it affected the Hindu population in an inverse proportion.

Savarkar

Chapter III

The Hidden Agenda of the Sangh Parivar

One Nation, One Culture, One People and One leader

'One nation, one culture, one people and one leader' has become the dominant and fundamental slogan of the Sangh Parivar. This is not just a slogan like any other electoral slogan of a political party. But this slogan is the hidden agenda of the Hindutva force. On the face value this slogan appears to be a sincere and sober attempt by the proponents of Hindu Nationalism to unite and to unify the various segments of the Indian population. This is also presented as the most urgent business today so that the nation can be saved and protected from the imperialist forces. The champions of one nation theory always take recourse to history and warn the citizens that there are 'hostile forces' or to state it in their own words 'foreign hand' within and outside the country who are all out to destroy the national unity and pride. Hence, all should be united to face this threat. In this thought pattern the 'other', the 'enemy' is projected as ready to devour the entire nation, culture, economy and society and thus various segments are mobilized to face this 'threat'.

The Sangh Parivar's slogan 'one nation, one culture, one people and one leader' is similar to the Nazi slogan *'Ein volk, ein Reich, ein Fuehrer'* (one people, one state, one leader). The disastrous effects of the Nazi slogan are still fresh in the minds of people. The incriminating notion of one state, one race provided the motivation to the Nazis to indulge in one of the most inhuman form of destruction. This holocaust ultimately led to the elimination of thousands of Jews. The Nazi forces utilized the inflation, unemployment, unrest and insecurity that was widespread in the country and mobilized the unemployed youth and affected population. The fascist forces in Nazi Germany were extremely aware of the crisis that was engulfing the country. They were also conscious of the social group that was most affected by the social, economic and political unrest and instability. It is these disappointed and distressed social groups that the Nazi regime chose as its social base. Once the Nazis came to power, they brought religion, culture and education under the Nazi control and converted the country into a totalitarian state. One of the wings of the party was the 'storm troopers' (brown shirts – Khakhi shorts of the RSS)[1].

There is a group of people who discard the saffron wave as a passing phenomenon. They look at the way in which some of the fascist and reactionary forces have been dethroned from the face of the earth. This is historically true but one also needs to focus on the after effects of these monstrous and horrendous forces. Historically speaking, the Nazis were successful for a period of time because they appealed to the senses and emotions of their adherers. Though their rule lasted only for a short period of time, the harm done to society and people are colossal. Similarly, in the Indian sub-continent, tyrannical rule in the period of emergency led to forceful sterilization, denial of freedom of press and expression, subverting of political and cultural ethos etc. Yet, the people of India rose in unison and defeated and dethroned the autocratic ruler Mrs. Indira Gandhi. But the ruinous effects of that rule continue even today especially in the political domain.

In the same vein, it can be argued that the saffron upsurge is only a passing phenomenon and one need not be greatly worried about it. From the historical reading one can be assured of the fact that the ascent of the Hindutva force is not a lasting phenomenon. But the hardship that the entire country will be plagued with will have to be kept clearly in mind. Here it is crucial that we examine the overt and covert agenda of the Sangh Parivar.

The Sangh Parivar's demand for 'cultural nationalism' or 'Hindu nationalism' is also motivated by the identification of the nation with race (Aryan) and religion (upper caste Hindu) and one leader (Brahminical order). Though the underlying ideology of the Sangh Parivar is the Brahminical social order, yet it has projected itself to be the champion of the entire Hindu community. In this regard, the Sangh Parivar has been successful in proposing itself to be defending not only the 'religious rights' of the majority Hindu community but also the political and economic interests of the entire population. The repeated use of Motherland and Holyland, is an attempt to instigate a sense of respect and reverence towards the 'nation'. But if one unravels the real programme of the Sangh, one realizes that it is an enterprise to once again establish the multi-dimensional hegemony of the brahminical world order.

Another consequential move of the Sangh Parivar is that it has managed to attract the middle caste and middle class with its scheme of providing them an identity and economic security. It has also provided political platform for self-determination of the middle caste and middle class groups. Once again, it is basically to contain and curtail the assertion of the backward caste kulaks.[2] Whether it is the rise of the Yadav-Kurmi-Koeri trio in Bihar, or the Yadav-Koeri in Uttar Pradesh, or the rise of upper backward castes in other parts of India, the brahminical system saw its downfall. Hence, it rose with vengeance to blunt all these upsurge and to re-establish its dominance and monopoly. But one should not be fooled by the attempts of the BJP, which appoints leaders from the backward castes as office bearers of its units at the state and the district levels. This once again forms part of its political game to garner electoral support for its already existent 'Hindu vote'.

Above all, the Sangh has invested its energy in building up leadership among the Dalits and the Tribals in the recent past. By this move, the saffron battalion has ensured a space for its various activities. Through this exercise, the Sangh Parivar has managed to establish this fact that it is ready to discard its 'untouchable' image and is willing to enter in dialogue with the Dalits, Tribals and women form the lower social order. But in reality, its original agenda to uphold and maintain at whatever cost the brahminical social order has not been given up by the Sangh Parivar. This was precisely, the question raised to the newly appointed 5th President of BJP, Mr. Bangaru Lakshman. Interestingly, the saffron brigade has also charted a course of action through which it hopes to court the minority communities, especially the Muslims.

It has been argued in the previous chapters, that the downtrodden communities had never been considered part of the society. The founders of the saffron brigade always denied the extreme form of stratification as well as the discrimination that went with that. According to Golwalkar, 'The feeling of inequality, of high and low, which has crept into the varna system is comparatively of recent origin But in its original form, the distinctions in the social order did not imply any discrimination of big or small, high or low, among its constituents. On the other hand, the Gita tells us that the individual who does his assigned duties in life in a spirit of selfless service only worships God through such performance'.[3] All these are attempts to rope in the downtrodden into the mainline for the benefit of the brahminical forces.

Since, the political freedom gave the right to vote the Dalits, the Tribals and the most backward castes found a space for themselves in the state. With the attainment of political freedom these oppressed groups have been making consistent and concrete attempts to secure a space for themselves in the Indian society too. But this move of theirs has been well perceived by the upper caste brahminical force and it is unleashing one game plan after the other to crush their aspirations. It is this social fact that the present chapter will deal with in a detailed manner.

A. WOMEN AND THE HINDUTVA FORCE

Women constitute the *adhi-abadhi,* that is, half of the population. In every forums it is broadcasted that since women constitute half of the population, they should be treated as the other wheel of the family and social vehicle. But these declarations are far from reality. Women constitute the major segment of the agricultural labourers. In the present liberation context, they are being employed in some of the unorganized sectors as casual labourers and as labourers who can be easily retrenched. They are kept illiterate and ignorant, so that the ruling powers can enjoy total servitude and subjugation from women. Women are not entitled to equal share with men in ancestral property and thus they are kept under the control of the patriarchal male society. This dependence leads to increasing exploitation and oppression.

Women have fought constantly against their marginalization and dehumanization. The inspiration for women's struggle may have come from various sources yet they have all contributed in the emancipation of the women from their dehumanized social conditions and patriarchal dominance. Women's movement is as old as oppression on women. But with the gradual spread of women's struggle demanding social dignity, equality, political participation and equal wages and share in the property, women's movements came into occupy a space for themselves in their own right. The constant use of the term 'feminism' in the early 18th century once again brought the women's movement into the centre stage. But these struggles did not take place in a vacuum. Constant and consistent struggles had to be waged on various fronts so as to assert women's issues. In course of time, women's movement itself went through various changes and issues got sharper and more focused.

Whether it is in the Chipko Movement or the Uttranchal Movement of the hills, the fisherfolks movements at the coastal area all over the country, the Jharkhand movement, the peasant movements, the naxalite movements, anti-liquor movements, spontaneous outbursts or the women's movements *per se*, women moved away from short term political interests to challenge the very patriarchal system on which the gender inequality is based. This has led the women's movement to come into direct conflict with the powers that be. The patriarchal system draws its sustenance from the male dominated religious beliefs, religious traditions and scriptures. The emergence of fundamentalism has given a new lease of life to the male domination, which was being dismantled in the recent past under pressure from women's movements. But the ascent of the hindutva force is once again trying to drive women to the homes and hearth. It is appropriate to view the fear of women and women's movements towards the Sangh Parivar or the reactionary Hindu right wing forces from this backdrop.

Religion has provided women with solace and support in times of crisis. It has also created socio-cultural space for women to explore their own identities and interact with other women for their emancipation, in an otherwise oppressive social milieu. But religion has also legitimized the existing social order and justified the gender subordination of women.

Lots of goddesses are worshipped but religious discourses do not proceed from the vantagepoint of the women but predominantly from the male point of view. The *Saptapada* and the *Kanyadan* rituals of marriage devalue women. The *garbhadan* ritual makes women only the receptacle for the 'seed' planted by the father and hence he becomes the natural guardian of the child and thus property flows from father to son. Paradoxically the ideology of motherhood extols the duties and virtues of the mother without giving any real authority over the child. The revival of *sati* at Deoralas was more to assert the Rajput ideology and to draw political clout than to highlight any religious sentiments. This is based on the *stree-dharma*, that is, female religious duties.[4] Taking recourse to traditional practices is an attempt to provide women with religious space but it is also an assault on their equality and authority.

The presentation of Ramayana serial has helped in projecting a monolithic Hindu identity and has relegated women to an inferior place. Among all the variants of Hinduism, the present attempt to homogenize the Hindu way of life has the least scope for the liberation of all women. But it is also a fact that the present form of Hinduism provides enormous solace to the middle class and upper caste women who have no identity except being that of a 'housewives'. Even the *bhajan mandalis* and the *kirtan sabhas* that the Sangh Parivar has managed to organize for these women have provided them an outlet from a life of drudgery and timelessness.

The demolition of Babri Masjid has left 1) a trail of blood and broken faith. 2) It has also crystallized the deep-rooted structural malaise which has afflicted the Indian politics over the last 45 years and made evident the basic socio-economic conflicts over scarce resources. India today looks at itself through a fractured mirror image and has constructed "we' and "the other'. Ideologies do not exist in isolation. But they are culturally constructed explanations.[5] It is necessary to understand the hidden agenda for women within the Utopian society visualized in fundamentalist doctrines the world over.

Mridula Sinha, ex-president of BJP Mahila Morcha, in an interview in 1993 stated that "1) A woman should not work outside the home unless her family is financially very deprived. 2) I gave dowry and received dowry. 3) I oppose women's liberation, as it is another name for 'lose morals'. 4) We oppose equal rights for both sexes. 5) There is nothing wrong with domestic violence against women; very often it is women's fault. We advice women to try and adjust, as her non-adjustment creates the problem. 6) Women's future lies in perpetuating the present, because no where else are women worshipped as we are in India. 7) For us women's liberation means liberation from atrocities. It does not mean they should be relieved of their duties as wives and mothers".[6]

Another ex-President, Vijaya Raje Scindia led a group of women in protest march against 'anti-*sati*' legislation, asserting that "it is the fundamental right of Hindu women to commit sati, as it is in preservation of our past glory and culture". These women who are speaking for the upholding of past glory and tradition, are speaking the language of the brahminical male society. But one should not remain at this level alone. It is extremely important to go into the heart of the matter of the brahminical male world order.

In this regard the intuition gained by some of the women activists and intellectuals need to be spelt out here. Tanika Sarkar and Urvasi Butalia maintain that "politically and methodologically the assertive participation of women in right wing campaign like women marching in support of widow immolation, pulled many of our assumptions into a state of crisis. For, we have always seen women as victims of violence rather than its perpetrators and we have always perceived their public, political activity and interest as positive, liberating force. The strident words of hate uttered by a *sanyasin* (technically woman renouncer) that have led to so many deaths, the presence of thousands of *karsevikas* (a term from form the Sikh religion to denote people who do manual work as part of service to their religion. Here, in a curious inversion, it was used for the destroyers of the mosque) from distant parts who came to witness and celebrate the demolition of an old mosque seemed to cruelly mock our convictions, our tools of analysis".[7] The demolition squad (kar sevaks) of Babri Masjid as well as the rioters of whatever caste or class became 'our own' against the 'others' to the women. The 'other' also involved women like themselves, except that they belonged to another religious community.

In their perceptive analysis, the above mentioned authors argue for clear and categorical understanding of fundamental factors that lead women to indulge in communal and anti-human activities. "One need to seriously identify the social bases of women's contingent, the domestic ideology and gender notions as well as the larger social interests with which they have been mobilised, the changing forms of their mobilisation and activism over time and space, the directions into which such activism was going to lead both in terms of gender politics and the politics of the Hindu right in general".[8]

Urvasi Butalia highlights the manner in which women are used in communal conflicts to score one's point over the perceived enemy. The most emotive issue that communalists have been able to manipulate into their agenda of aggression, revenge and redistribution for past wrongs, was the mass rape and abduction of women during, and following on the partition. This issue was used to construct the identity of the Muslim man, the Hindu man, and the Muslim woman and by implication, the Hindu woman, whose body became the field on which the entire discussion took place in the assembly.

A matter of considerable concern to women's groups has been the rise of militant women within right wing Hindu political formations. In Bombay, the Shiv Sena has been able to mobilise large numbers of women actively and more successfully than women's groups. They have managed to build a sense of community to provide solutions to immediate problems and have created a social niche for women that challenges notions of female emancipation that feminists have held dear. This is also the indication of the success of the autonomous women's movements which has mobilised successfully on these issues, and whose potential the Hindu right has been quick to seize.[9]

Although or perhaps because the image of the Hindu woman is located within the context of the present, it has been endowed with an impressive past, to which at least lip service continues to be paid rather consistently. This past is constituted, basically, from two elements, one designed as the vedic age, and the second associated with the Manusmrti. Through all these what is projected is an implicit and explicit understanding that patriarchal tendencies are basically a response to external threats or challenges. Hence, the Hindu society is logically absolved of any inherently oppressive characteristics. Besides, an agenda for action is offered, that is, if Hindu women remove any outside influence and or collaborate with their men in such an endeavour, they will automatically be freed from the bonds of patriarchal restraints. Externalising the problem also provides for a certain respite from confrontations within what is defined as Hindu society, as such confrontation can then be viewed as irrelevant and counter-productive.[10]

Kumkum Roy goes on to explicitate how the women are presented in the Scriptures. According to her, the Rig Veda consists of over a thousand hymns of which only twelve or fifteen, that is, about 1 per cent is attributed to women seers. In Manusmrti women were denied access to the *upanayana* or initiation which marked the beginning of access to sacred learning. This was reinforced by suggesting substitutes: for women, marriage was portrayed as equivalent to the initiation of the male, serving the husbands was equated with the period of studentship, and the performance of household duties was identified with the worship of the sacred fire (Manusmriti II.67).[11] It is also significant that in traditions like Buddhism, there were more women scholars.

Manusmriti [IX. 33] and other brahmanical texts equate womb with the field, in which men sow seed, offspring being determined by the nature of the latter, with the former conceived as a passive, supportive receptacle. The field, moreover, is ideally owned by a man, and, by extension, the produce of the field is his without any dispute. But in real life, one can also recount innumerable cases, in which women are persecuted and set on 'kitchen fire' for not delivering a male offspring.

Duplicity is found in a great measure in Manusmriti. In chapter III verse 56 Manu characterises the worship of women as a means of pleasing the gods. But the question that needs to be raised is what is the objective of this worship. Because in III.61 it is stated that no children are born if the woman is not attractive to her husband. Also in IX.81 clear injunctions are given that the wife who speaks unpleasantly could be abandoned immediately by the husband. Thus, a careful reading of brahminical texts and behaviour reveals this fact that on the one hand there is the argument of the antiquity whereby everything old and 'Hindu' is automatically sanctified. On the other hand anything which appears blatantly discriminatory by present standards, is explained away in terms of external factors. Moreover, in the selection of texts to justify or to deny, the criterion for selection can be shifted almost imperceptibly from one occasion to another, and issues can be blurred.[11a]

Purshottam Agarwal, while speaking about the attempt of the Sangh Parivar to legitimize rape as a political weapon bemoans the fact that the so-called intellectuals seem to buy this ideology. He states, 'What is distressing is that there is a tendency on the part of the middle-classes and intelligentsia to underplay or even rationalise cruel acts like rape, arson and murder. Many observers of riot in Surat in Gujarat, after 'mass raping' and massacres noted that "feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassments about what took place are rare among people. In retrospect, for many Hindus, the killing of Muslims seems to have been rationalised by suggesting that this was a 'proper' punishment for a minority, which has stepped out of line. The massacre can thus be explained as a ritual of purification in order to pacify divine wrath'.[12]

The real question that needs to be posed in this context, however, is how things have come to such a pass that the normal condemnation of acts such as wanton killing, destruction and mass rape has come to be replaced by an unashamed approval. Often time communalism is sought to be explained only in the context of religion and the socio-economic causes of anger and frustration. The remedy out of this thinking is either a broad democratic mobilisation on socio-economic issues and also urge people to be religiously tolerant. By its own admission, the primary agenda of communalism is to transform the traditional, religious identity into a modern political one. In this sense, the communalistic project is as non-religious as any other project of nation-building; the real conflict thus is not between religious fanaticism on the one hand and the secular world-view on the other. It is actually between two notions of nationalism itself -- authoritarian and democratic.

Extending this argument further, we can say that the brahminical communal nationalism is the conflict between brahminical social order and the outcasted Dalits, Tribals and women. It is a battle between a patriarchal society and women; it is a long drawn out battle between the hegemonic and homogenising trends of the upper castes and pluralistic tendencies of the downtrodden. It is a conflict of interests between the upper caste-class rulers and the toiling masses.

Purshotham further argues that one also should try to understand the outbursts like that of the more spiritual persons. Sudhir Chandra states, 'Swami Chinmayanand whose lectures on the Gita has won him an impressive following among the urban literati belligerently asserted that, "let the government make the Muslims understand that they will have to make the sacrifice". If Uma Bharati or Vinay Katyar of Bajrang Dal make this statement it will not be out of tune but Swami Chinmayanand making this statement baffles everyone.

Dr. Sudhir Kakar's debate arrives at the startling conclusion that, 'The fact that fifteen out of twenty eight patients were possessed by a Muslim spirit indicates the extent of this projection in the sense that the Muslim seems to be the symbolic representation of the alien in the Hindu unconscious. Possession by a Muslim *bhut* (evil spirit) reflects the patient's desperate efforts to convince himself and others that his hunger for forbidden food, tumultuous sexuality and uncontrollable rage belong to the Muslim destroyer of taboos and are farthest away from his "good" Hindu self'.[13]

Purshotham with intuition finds base in the similar acts in the epic texts where the virility of the community comes to hinge upon defending one's honour and humiliating the 'Other' through the agency of the sexuality of women. He supports his argument by the following statement: 'Duryodhana could think of no better way than ordering the public disrobing of Draupadi to decisively emphasise the humiliating and final defeat of the Pandavas in the game of dice, and the Pandavas could not protest for the simple reason that Duryodhana, even in his reprehensible act, was justified in terms of the moral paradigm of patriarchy which was binding upon the Pandavas'.[14]

Hindutva Founders' views on Women

As stated above, Savarkar is credited for having rigorously spelt out the tenets of Hinduness and Hindutva. Here let us look at his views on religious and communal conflicts. Savarkar's hagiographer Dhananjaya Keer remarks: "He said that Pakistan's inhuman and barbarous acts such as kidnapping and raping Indian women would not be stopped unless Pakistan was given tit for tat. Two years earlier Sarvarkar had expressed his opinion that the liberal policy adopted by Shivaji in case of Muslim women was wrong as this cultured and human treatment could not evoke in those fanatics the same feelings about Hindu women. They should have been given tit for tat, he observed frankly, so that they might have realised the horrors of those brutalities".[15]

In his much-publicized work, 'The Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History', completed in 1963, Savarkar spells out his mind about various issues and personalities of the past. According to him, 'So long as Samrat Ashoka called himself a follower of the Vedic religion, that means till about 200 B.C., the north western frontier guards of the Mauryan Empire remained well-equipped and invincible. But as soon as Ashoka adopted Buddhism, this security of the Empire fell to pieces".[16] This statement clearly exposes the brahminical bias against Buddhism. Savarkar totally forgets the great contributions made by Ashoka towards establishing peace between various communities after he embraced Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar has poignantly pointed out the historical bias that has existed between Brahminism and Buddhism.[17]

Savarkar's bias against the Muslims is also well known. He lamented that, "Having learnt by rote the maxim to give food to the hungry and water to the thirsty is a virtue, the Hindus went on giving milk to the vile poisonous cobras and vipers. Even while the Muslim demons were demolishing Hindu temples and breaking to pieces their holiest of idols like Somnath, they never wreacked their vengeance upon those wicked Muslims, even when they had golden opportunities to do so, nor did they even take out a single brick from the walls of Mosques, because their religious teachers and priests preached the virtue of not inflicting pain on the offenders".[18] But Savarkar has totally closed his eyes to that history which depicts the treacherous ways in which the princely rulers betrayed each other to gain kingdom and that also in alliance with the Mughal emperors and later with the British colonizers.

Savarkar's understanding of Hindu women needs special mention here. 'Muslim women too played their devilish part in the molestation and harassment of the Hindu women. The Muslim women never feared retribution or punishment at the hands of any Hindu for their heinous crime. They had a perverted idea of women's chivalry...Muslim women were sure that even in the thick of battles and in the confusion wrought just after that, neither the victor Hindu chiefs, nor any of their common soldiers nor even any civilian would ever touch their hair'. He further raises the moot question, 'Suppose if from the earliest Muslim invasion of India the Hindu also, whenever they were victors in the battle-field, had decided to pay the Muslim fair sex in the same coin or punished them in some other ways! That is, by conversion even with force and when with this horrible apprehension in their heart they would have desisted from their evil designs against any Hindu lady'.[19] The reason for such a noble behaviour of the Hindu warriors and others is seen by Savarkar as: 'Haunted with the fantastic idea of chivalry to women and blind eye to time, place and person, the Hindus of that period never tried to chastise the Muslim women-folk for their wrongs to Hindu women, even when the former were many a time completely at their mercy'. In this regard, Savarkar does not even rule out a person like Shivaji.

Purshotham asserts that choosing Shivaji for the rebuke for misplaced chivalry and a perverse notion of virtue is extremely significant. Apart from being a popular hero, Shivaji is the central figure in the Hindu communalist reconstruction of medieval Indian history. He is almost a cult figure and is held in high esteem for his qualities of character and leadership. His treatment of the daughter-in-law of the Muslim governor of Kalyan is naturally reversed in chronicles as well as in popular memory and literature as a model of conduct befitting a noble king and a chivalrous hero. It is significant to note that even the conduct of a hero like Shivaji is to be condemned if it upholds a moral barrier for the construction of baser instincts as the valid political mode. The sexuality of women is nothing but an arena, a medium, a symbol; just as you die for holding the honour of your national flag and consider it your national duty to save the flag from the enemy, so also your attitude towards women should be the same, that is, uphold the dignity of yours and violently defile the others as retribution or pre-emption.[20] If the proponents of Hindutva did not spare Shivaji would they spare any one?

This is not the end of the degeneration of the Hindutva force. The same malice can be seen in the later supporters of the Sangh Parivar. When a Rithambhara or an Uma Bharati calls those Hindus who believe in non-violence, secularism and decent moral values, '*hijras*' (eunuchs/impotent male) she is quite in tune with Savarkar who castigates Hindu society in exactly the same vein. It is in this discourse that both explicitly and decisively, foul becomes fair and fair becomes foul. But above all through this form of discourse, certain legitimacy is also obtained for anything that is foul.

The fundamental issue here is not that this type of behaviour was seen only in the past or in vogue only today. The important point of discourse is that there is continuity in the ideology as well as the operation of the Sangh Parivar. For example, Savarkar had long ago done in the discourse of values what was done in Surat, Bhagalpur or wherever riots take place, in the realm of behaviour. He turned the Muslims into an outcast outside the pale of society, almost a sub-human species not to be given the benefits of human values and virtues. In this process, history is only deployed to prove and communicate an essentially moral point, which is extremely simple: Rape *per se* is not a crime. In fact, it is a valid weapon in the warfare with Muslims. Interestingly, the riot that took place after the Babri Masjid demolition on December 1992 is very similar to the riot that took place in the month of August 2000. Babri Masjid is far away from Surat but the effect of communal riots was severely experienced here. Similarly, Amarnath Yatris were killed in Kashmir in August 2000 but the *'bharat bandh'* called by various frontal organizations of Sangh Parivar led to communal clashes once again in Surat. The most depressing fact of this riot was that once again the police became the defenders of the lives and honour of the Hindus against the 'enemy Muslims'.

The double dealings of the Hindutva force

The presentation of falsehood as truth has been an ancient technique of the Sangh. On 29 December 1949, the front page of the *Organiser* carried a story entitled: 'Pakistan the Sinner: 25,000 abducted, thousands sold'. The lead story stated, 'For the honour of Sita, Sri Rama warred against and destroyed Ravana, when filthy Khilji besieged Chitoor, thousands of women headed by Rani Padmini all clad in *gerua* [saffron] saris, mouthed the funeral pyre smiling, before the *mleccha* [impure] could pollute a drop of the noble Hindu blood. Today, when ten thousands of Hindu women are spending sorrowful days and unthinkable nights in Pakistan, the first free government of the Union of Indian Sovereign Democratic Republic has nothing but a whimper for them".[21]

The *Organiser* in another issue while talking of the Hindu women sees the crisis as a threat to manhood. Though the women are the centre of the issue finally, it is the man who is challenged. 'Tens of thousands of our pious mothers and sisters who would faint at the sight of blood, were kidnapped and sold for so many rupees, annas, pies. The early and effective absorption in the economy and society of the regions of their adoption is the primary duty of every national of Hindustan. The task is not easy. It bristles with difficulties. That is obvious. But no less obvious is the fact the problem is **a challenge to our manhood, no less than to our nationalism'**.[22]

An important mindset of the Sangh Parivar needs to be stated here. Abducted and raped women must stay where they are, in a state, if you like, of permanent rape because it is this that will enable Hindu men to avenge themselves on those responsible for this condition of their 'sisters'. B.L. Sharma, a senior member of VHP in Delhi claimed that his turning to militant Hinduism has been directly occasioned by the tales of rape, violation and abduction of Hindu women by Muslim men during partition. Not surprisingly, it did not seem to count that Hindu men too had played no mean role in the rape and abduction of Muslim women or indeed of Hindu women. What had overwhelming importance was the rape, by the 'Other', particularly as this proved yet again that Pakistan was a nation built on the 'predatory desire for Hindu property and Hindu women'.[23]

Discourses of Equality and Gender

Ratna Kapur and Brenda Cossman in their article 'Women, Legal Discourse and the Saffron Agenda' focus on the Sangh Parivar's understanding of gender equality. According to them, 'Hindutva represents a particular set of beliefs and categories; it is a way of giving meaning to the world and of organising social institutions. The Hindutva campaign is also ideological; that is, it is related to the social, economic, and political conditions of contemporary India, and to the legitimation of social and political power. It is part of a contest over the dominant or hegemonic way of understanding the world, and of establishing an understanding that contributes to the legitimation of social power and inequality. Hindutva is not yet an ideologically dominant discourse, but rather, is involved in a discursive struggle for ideological dominance. These discursive struggles are ongoing at many levels -- historical, cultural and economic'.[24]

The legal and political concept of equality and particularly of sexual equality, is also the site of discursive struggles. The Hindu right is seeking to redefine these concepts in accordance with their visions of the role of women in Indian society. This is a contest over the constitution of gender identities, i.e., over the power to define who and what Indian women should be. In many respects, this discursive struggle parallels the contest over secularism and freedom of religion. Indeed, these struggles are overlapping and mutually constituting. There have been a number of competing visions of equality -- competing visions which parallel the debates around secularism. At least two approaches to equality are clearly identifiable in political and legal discourse: a formal and a substantive approach.[25]

In the **formal approach**, equality is seen to require equal treatment, i.e., **all those who are the same must be treated the same**. It is based on treating likes alike. Accordingly, equality is equated with sameness. Only individuals who are the same are entitled to be treated equally. This initial definitional step can effectively preclude any further equality analysis. If the individuals or groups in question are seen as different, then no further analysis is required; difference justifies the differential treatment. Accordingly, when groups are not similarly situated, then they do not qualify for equality, even if the differences among them are the product of historic or systemic discrimination.

In contrast, the **substantive approach** to equality is seen as sometimes requiring different treatment, i.e., **those who are different may have to be treated differently in order to be treated equally**. It is based on the recognition that equality sometimes requires that individuals be treated differently. This approach is extremely critical of the formal model of equality, and its emphasis on sameness. The focus of a substantive equality approach is not simply with the equal treatment of the law, but rather with the actual impact of the law. The explicit objective of a model of substantive equality is the elimination of the substantive inequality of disadvantaged groups in society. The focus of the analysis is not on sameness or difference, but rather on disadvantage. Substantive equality is directed at eliminating individual, institutional and systemic discrimination against disadvantaged groups, which effectively undermines their full and equal social, economic, political and cultural participation in society. The central inquiry of this approach is whether the rule or practice in question contributes to the subordination of the disadvantaged group.

The debate over the meaning of equality is further complicated in the context of women, and gender equality. The question of the relevance of gender difference becomes the site for further contests. **Three approaches to the question of gender difference can be identified**. In the first, ***women are understood as different from men -- more specifically***, as ***weaker, subordinate and in need of protection***. In this approach, any legislation or practice that treats women differently from men is justified on the basis that women and men are different, and that women need to be protected. This approach tends to essentialise difference, i.e., *to take the existence of gender difference as natural and inevitable.* There is no interrogation of the basis of the difference, nor consideration of the impact of the differential treatment on women. In the name of protecting women, this approach often serves to reinforce their subordinate status. This is called the **protectionist approach**.

In the second approach, ***women are understood to be the same as men***, i.e., ***for the purposes of law, they are the same, and must be treated the same.*** In this approach, any legislation or practice that treats women differently from men is seen to violate the equality guarantees. This sameness approach has been used to strike down provisions that treat women and men differently. It has, however, also been used to preclude any analysis of the potentially disparate impact of gender neutral legislation. According to the sameness approach, *it is sufficient that women and men be treated formally equally.* Any recognition of gender difference in the past has been perceived as a tool for justifying discrimination against women. This is called the **sameness approach**.

Finally, in the third approach, ***women are understood as an historically disadvantaged group, and as such, in need of compensatory or corrective treatment.*** Within this approach, gender difference is often seen as relevant and as requiring recognition in law. It is argued that *a failure to take difference into account will only serve to reinforce and perpetuate the difference and the underlying inequalities.* In this approach, rules or practices that treat women differently from men can be upheld, if such rules or practices are designed to improve the position of women. If, however, the legislation or practice were based on a stereotype or assumption that women are different, weaker or in need or protection, it would not be upheld. This approach argues that *gender differences must be taken into account in order to produce substantive equality for women.*

In the context of gender equality, the protectionist approach has been and continues to be dominant, although the sameness approach is increasingly evident.[26] These approaches to equality reflect the prevailing and competing discourses on women more generally. The protectionist approach reflects patriarchal and familial discourses, in which women have traditionally been constituted as different and weak, as wives and mothers, inferior and subordinate. The sameness approach reflects a liberal discourse which constitutes women as equal to men. While this liberal discourse has made some inroads, the patriarchal discourse remains powerful, and continues to inform the political and legal claims that women make to equality.

The **BJP approach to equality** seems unequivocally formal i.e., individuals who are the same should be treated the same. References can be found throughout BJP literature and speeches to the importance of non-discrimination, and to the equal treatment of all citizens. Indeed, it is this formal understanding of equality that informs their position on secularism, i.e., the equal respect of all religions, in their view, involves treating all religious communities the same.[27] Additionally, it is this formal approach to equality that underlies the BJP's opposition to article 30 and Article 370 of the Constitution, as well as support of a Uniform Civil Code, and to the replacement of Minorities Commission with a Human Rights Commission.[28]

The **RSS approach to equality** is less clear. On the one hand their rhetoric often echoes the equal treatment approach of BJP, particularly in relation to religious minorities. 'Equal treatment', and 'equality before the law' are invoked to attack special treatment of minorities." However, these same RSS ideologues have displayed a rather different approach to equality. Golwalkar explicitly rejected the 'Western' concept of equality og gender.[29] In contrast to this understanding which, in his view, emphasizes 'equality of men'. On the material plane because all men were equally in need of all ... basic material needs',[30] Golwalkar argues that it is only on the spiritual plane that it can be said that all men are equal. 'It is in this sense, the same spirit being immanent in all, that men are equal. Equality is applicable only on the plane of the Supreme Spirit. But on the physical plane the same spirit manifest itself in a wondrous variety of diversities and disparities.'[31] Golwalkar argues that 'disparity is an indivisible part of nature and we have to live with it', and concludes that harmony, not equality, should be the organising principle.[32]

A similar emphasis on harmony is echoed by contemporary RSS leaders. HV Seshadri writes: 'The principle of equality propounded by Hinduism envisages an all round harmonious synthesis.... All members of a family mete out equal treatment to each other and they also perform different rules. It is possible because they love each other and they live in harmony. The body of man itself has different organs, which perform diverse functions, but a harmonious order prevails among them. Hence the Hindutva and RSS primarily lay an emphasis on harmonious order'.[33] Based on this vision, Sheshadri concludes: 'We cannot contemplate a society, a life or a world without the elements of diversification. When we visualise the unity in diversity, we would be able to bring equality and harmony'.[34]

Equality, in the RSS view, does not mean that all persons must be treated the same. Rather, equality means harmony within difference. This view seems to contemplate equality as harmony within explicitly unequal material conditions. The RSS redefinition of equality thereby undermines the very spirit of both formal and substantive equality. The Sangh Parivar once again takes recourse to symbolic discourse to explain away fundamental differences among human beings.

The Hindu right's approach to women and women's equality is found somewhat more sporadically in BJP and RSS literature and statements.[35] The discourse on women is often characterised by its strikingly religious overtones defining women in the images of Hindu goddesses and consorts -- as mothers and wives, dutiful and sacrificing. For example, in a recent statement of commitments, the discussion of women begins with the statement that 'BJP looks upon womankind as *Matri Shakti*'.[36] The image of the Hindu woman as *matri-shakti* has been evident in a number of controversies in which the BJP has been involved. In the controversy around Uma Bharati, who was alleged to have had a romantic involvement with another BJP member, the focus was on Uma Bharati to prove and publicly proclaim her chastity -- not on the man with whom she was alleged to have had an affair. It is women, not men, who must be chaste and pure, and who must, like Sita, go to great lengths to prove their purity.[37] The attitude of the BJP leadership in the context of the Ramjanmabhoomi movement has also exemplified the way in which women are seen primarily as mother figures. Vijayaraje Scindia stated at the *kar seva* held in 1991 that mothers and wives of *sevaks* who sacrificed their lives for the temple construction were worth worshipping.[38] Women are intended to inspire and strengthen not so much through example, but through sacrifice and tears.

However, the BJP does not always deploy this religious obscurantist rhetoric in their representation of women. At regular intervals it also projects a more liberal view. 'The BJP pledges itself to restore to women the position of equality with men that the Indian tradition proposed and accepted.'[39]

The discourse of equality is fused with the more fundamentalist discourse that seeks to reclaim a glorious and ancient past. The objective of equality thereby becomes the restoration of women to the position that they once enjoyed in this 'Golden Age'. It is in this emphasis on returning to the past that the BJP distinguishes its position from the women's movement, particularly in the West. The Mahila Morcha writes, for example: We conceptually differ from what is termed as the women's liberation movement in the West. We require sort of readjustment in the social and economic set up. No fundamental change in values is desirable. Women in India ever [sic] had a pride of place within the household, and the society. That has only to be re-established and re-affirmed.[40]

The BJP's understanding of the 'equality' to which women are to be restored further emerges in their statements and policies on women. While the BJP has generally adopted a formal approach to equality, the equal treatment of women and men is not what they seem to have in mind. In a telling statement, the BJP asserts: "Men and women are equal but they are not the same". With a single stroke, the BJP both invokes the discourse of women's equality, and at the same time undermines any real entitlement to it by stating that women are different. Their formal approach to equality is coupled with a protectionist approach to gender difference. Since sameness is the prerequisite for equality, women, who are different, do not have to be treated the same.

The way in which women are to be treated, and the position of 'equality' to which they are to be restored becomes increasingly evident in the BJP policies on women. This policy focuses on women's traditional roles in the family. For example, health care, particularly maternal and natal care, are taken up, as are smokeless chulhas and sanitation facilities for poor rural and slum women. Policies that reinforce women's role in the family as mothers and wives are supported as part of women's equality rights. In so doing, the Hindu right reinforces the assumption of natural and essential differences between women and men. Women are mothers and wives -- they are *matri shakti-they* are different, and these differences must be honoured and protected.

Mridula Sinha, president of the Mahila Morcha, has expressly stated that women's role in the family is primary in their programmes and activities for women: 'We maintain that the family and its unity must be maintained. Too much of freedom to women would break the nuclear family and we resist this."[41] The political issues that are expressly excluded from their agenda further highlight the extent to which BJP's policy supports women in their traditional family roles. For example, writing in regard to the UN conference on Women in Nariobi: 'The BJP women's wing expressed its profound appreciation of the conference. However, it also expressed its sharp disagreement with certain subjects that were discussed at the conference, subjects that are antithetical to Indian social order and our cultural moorings. Evaluation of women's domestic work in terms of money is an insult to Indian motherhood ... Likewise the demand for legal sanction of lesbianism is too vulgar and irrelevant in the Indian context'.[42]

Wages for housework and lesbianism are both considered being antithetical to Indian womanhood -- defined in and through women's natural roles as mothers and wives. Political claims that, in their view, go too far beyond these traditional roles are dismissed. Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement is particularly revealing: 'Women who want to become men and want to make other women (like) men are worthy of ridicule'.[43] Implicit in this statement is the assumption of natural differences between women and men. These differences can be strategically deployed to justify any differential, protective and discriminatory treatment. To argue counter to their policies -- to argue that any particular legislation discriminates against women -- is met with the refrain that women are trying to become men. Political claims that go too far beyond the traditional roles of women in the family are rejected as attempts to make women into men and thus ridiculous.

It is important to recognise that the BJP's policy on women also includes issues of women's education and employment -- issues, which seem to bring women out from within the narrow confines of the family. The BJP has identified women's socio-economic dependence as a main cause of women's oppression, and accordingly, the party supports programmes designed to improve their socio-economic status, including increased employment opportunities, particularly in areas that suit women most. Women's illiteracy is also seen to contribute to this poor status, and must therefore be eliminated through improved access to education.

But the support given to improve educational and employment opportunities for women is justified in the name of the family: An Indian woman will command the affection of the father, the love of the husband, and the respect of her son only when she has been provided with equal rights and opportunities [Mirdula Sinha].

Women's role in the family as mothers and wives remains the cornerstone of the BJP approach to restoring women to the position of equality reserved for them in Indian tradition. We can begin to see the extent to which the traditional discourse of women as *matri shakti* infuses the BJP policies. Indeed, it is this image of *matri shakti* that can be seen to underlie the very understanding of women's equality. 'Man and woman will remain the two wheels of the chariot of the family, and the nation. There can be no better concept of unity and equality of man and woman than the concept of "Ardhanarishwar".

We can also begin to see here echoes of the RSS vision of equality, that is, of equality as harmony in diversity. Equality does not mean treating women the same as men. Nor does it mean compensating women for the ways in which they have traditionally been disadvantaged. Rather, it means an affirmation of the difference between women and men. These different roles of women and men, in the family and in society, are affirmed and celebrated as a harmonious synthesis.

The BJP approach to equality within the context of women thus remains somewhat elusive. They seem to appeal, on one level, to a formal approach to equality, coupled with a protectionist approach to difference, infused with religious and patriarchal discourses that ensure that women do not have to be treated the same as men. Yet, at a deeper level, it is apparent that the very meaning of the concept of equality begins to shift away from sameness and equal treatment towards difference and different treatment. In both approaches, however, we can begin to see one of the many paradoxes in the discourse of equality as deployed by the Hindu right, i.e., of legitimating their arguments with the liberal legal discourse of equality while at the same time, using this discourse to reinforce traditional images of women, and undermine any substantive claim to gender equality.

While the BJP holds the view of 'unity in diversity' with regard to gender issues, it follows the sameness of all women approach; that is, all women must be equal, when it comes to unity among women. This claim is but a thinly veiled (and often not veiled at all) attack on the Muslim community and the discriminatory treatment of Muslim women. When the BJP argues that all women must be treated equally, they mean that Muslim women should be treated the same as Hindu women. In this respect, their approach to equality corresponds to their approach to secularism, where any recognition of difference is seen to constitute a violation of secularism. Thus, any recognition of difference as between the women in different religious communities is seen to violate the constitutional guarantees of equality, which in their view, require the formally equal treatment of all those who are the same. Muslim women, as women should be the same as Hindu women-and thus they should be treated the same in law. We can thus begin to see a second paradox in the way in which the concept of equality is used in Hindu communalist discourse. The formal discourse of equality in the context of women is thereby deployed to undermine the equality of minority religious communities. Treating the Muslim community equally means treating them like the Hindu community, which means in effect, subordinating Muslims to Hindu norms and practices.

Redefining women by the Sangh

The constitution of women's identity is done through multiple discourses of nationalism and gender, sexuality and community. Even within the Sangh *parivar,* the discourses constituting Hindu women are multiple, and at times, seemingly contradictory. Both BJP and RSS discourses on women are characterised by internally inconsistent statements. For example, most moderate voices within the Rashtrasevika Samiti and the BJP Mahila Morcha oppose sati, whereas some of the more extreme voices have supported a woman's right to choose to commit sati. Similarly, moderate voices support the legislative changes that have been made to Hindu personal law, and argue for a similar reform of Muslim law through a Uniform Civil Code. BJP policy even speaks of ensuring women's equal access to their husbands' property. Yet, many RSS ideologues, sants and sadhus express their opposition to the reform of Hindu personal law, and argue for the restoration of the laws of Manu.[44] A revised social science textbook for high schools, issued by the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, states that the reforms in Hindu personal law, in the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, the Hindu Women's Property Rights Act, 1937, the Special Marriage Act, 1954, and the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act, 1955 have led to 'disorganisation within the family.' The total result of these progressive legislative measures... in favour of women is tension and strife in the family.[45] Recently, some sants and sadhus have even argued in favour of the restoration of Hindu polygamy.[46]

Within the Sangh *parivar,* we thus can see at least two distinct positions constituting the Hindu woman -- a moderate/conservative position and a fundamentalist position. Underlying these different positions is a common thread -- women as *matri shakti*, as wives and mothers, as strong Hindu women. At a deeper level, however, we can see at least two different discourses constituting the Hindu woman: a 'traditional' discourse in which she is celebrated as *matri shakti;* and a 'modem' discourse in which she is the bearer of rights.[47] Yet, the discourses of tradition and modernity, religion and liberalism, are carefully and insidiously manipulated to justify -- even celebrate -- the oppression of women in Hindu communities.

There is another level at which these discourses of tradition and modernity appear contradictory. The BJP, particularly the Mahila Morcha, support policies that would improve the socio-economic position of women, and thereby increase women's opportunities for economic independence. Similarly, RSS women are empowered through physical and intellectual training, and many are encouraged to work outside home.[48] The modernising influence in the constitution of the Hindu woman thus sits in awkward juxtaposition to the more traditional discourses. Women's increased independence, particularly, their socioeconomic independence, creates the material condition for women to exist outside of the family. The modernising discourses thus create the very possibility for a break from the traditional roles ascribed to women within the fundamentalist position.

The constitution of the new Hindu woman -- a woman who may be educated, and who may work outside of the home, a woman who is strong and powerful, inside her family, and her community -- is still a woman constituted through traditional discourses of *matri shakti, as* mother and wife; and of Sita, as chaste, pure and loyal. The new Hindu woman is strong, but she is strong in restoring the glories of an ancient past, a past which, as reconstructed through communal discourses, accords a particular role for women in the family, and in society: dutiful wives, and self-sacrificing mothers. Any additional roles that women may perform are ancillary to these. Indeed, women's work and education are seen as a means of strengthening their roles in the family.

In this communalist discourse, although women are seen as different from men there is a strong emphasis that they should not be weak. Rather, the Hindu right seeks to reconstitute women as strong. The RSS policy takes a strong stand against violence against women, including organising women to defend themselves. A strong Hindu woman is seen as essential for the constitution of a strong Hindu society, since women are responsible for raising the new generation, with appropriate values and discipline. Strong Hindu women are to be important conduits of a strong Hindu culture. This constitution of the identity of the Hindu woman is an essential part of the process of constituting a new definition of nation and Hindu identity -- a nation and identity that is both 'traditional' and modem.

Hindutva and Muslim Women

The construction of Muslim women's identity is similarly constituted through multiple discourses within the Hindu right. However, within Hindutva, the Muslim woman is constituted in very different terms. The construction of the Muslim woman sits in sharp contrast to the Hindu woman -- she is the oppressed and subservient 'Other'.[49] This Muslim woman is also the product of a paradoxical mix of traditional and modem discourses. But, unlike the Hindu woman, she is neither respected as mother, nor is she the subject of rights. Saving Muslim women from their oppression becomes the justification for not respecting the practices and beliefs of the Muslim community, and indeed, the basis for subordinating this community to Hindu rule. Muslim women and in turn the Muslim community are constituted as the antithesis, as the binary opposition of Hindu women, and the Hindu community. Muslim women are what Hindu women are not. Moreover, this opposition is a hierarchical one -- Hindu is dominant and superior, Muslim is subordinate and inferior. Through this construction of the Muslim woman as 'Other', the Muslim community as a whole is judged and subordinated.

The product of this Hindu fundamentalist discourse of equality and secularism is a somewhat contradictory image -- Muslim women are different, but they should be the same. The unstated norm or reference point against which these women are measured is the Hindu woman, the unstated norm against which the Muslim community is measured by the Hindu community. By making Muslim women the same, they would ineffect be 'de-Muslimised', i.e., they would no longer be constituted through the discourses of their community. And in turn their community could no longer be constituted through the discourses of gender. This discursive strategy of the Hindu right is skillfully constructed to strike at the heart of identity -- the intersection of community and gender. Further, as in colonialism, this strategy operates to deflect attention from the subordinated condition of women within the dominant community. In the context of Hindu fundamentalism, attention is turned away from the subordination of women within Hindu culture. Rather than considering the oppression of women within their own community, this fundamentalist discourse attempts to refocus attention on the harm done to women within the Muslim custom *of iddat* and *mehr.*[50]

In conclusion it can be stated that the Hindu right seeks to redefine concepts like equality, gender, secularism and community in accordance with the vision of Hindutva. These efforts at redefinition are part of broader discursive struggle for ideological hegemony being waged by the forces of Hindutva. The Hindu right is seeking to reconstitute women in and through the image of the Hindu nation, and of reconstituting the nation in and through the image of Hindu women.

About the identity of women in today's society, V.Kannabiran and K. Kannabiran assert that public/political discourse on women is aimed at first classifying them by caste and community, creating levels so that different classifications can co-exist and separating the 'normal' from the 'abnormal' within each level and between levels. Those who are perceived as being outside the 'normal' cannot assert a legitimate claim to protection from the state: not just the women, but the communities they belong to. While the predicament of minority women and Dalit women is much the same, they are situated at different levels. Women of minority communities are located outside the Indian state, as it were. Constructing the 'otherness' then is the beginning and the end of constructing 'otherness' of their community vis-a-vis the 'Indian community'. Dalit women, on the other hand, exist within the Hinduised Indian state and their 'otherness' is constructed in a manner that reinforces the upper caste Hindu norm -- one that is essentially an undesirable 'aberration' within Hindu society and one that destroys the 'Hindu fabric' from within. The upper caste Hindus therefore see themselves as being threatened and under attack from two sides: from the outside, by immoral (in the wider sense of the term) minorities and from inside by 'unclean castes'. And women form the core target in both the perception of this threat as well as the use of violence to suppress it.[51]

Old wives' tales told in shocked tones in the family illustrate this. One was that Hindu women had to start wearing blouses as otherwise the Muslims would grab their breasts and pull them away. Here, the threat to the community is defined as the threat to the chastity of women of the community/caste and the threat is challenged through the violent expropriation of the chastity of the target group which is synonymous with the aggression on women of these groups. Further, since the struggle for hegemony/power is carried out on women's bodies, establishing control over women by rape or demonstrating a violation of one's women by rape then becomes a legitimate means of carrying out this struggle.[52]

Religious fundamentalism, communalism and caste chauvinism assert a control and hegemony that is antagonistic to women's interest in democracy or claims to human dignity. The price women pay for their identity in the community and the protection it guarantees is sacrifice of their democratic rights. It is due to this fact that the perception of women too changes in communal riots.

While women are the most vulnerable in a riot situation, we also see that women often share the communalised consciousness that targets them. We come across women hiding bodies of riot victims, sheltering rioters and participating actively in communal propaganda. Our experience in the women's movement has shown that women have very definite interests in caste and community. They experience the negation and insecurities that communities and caste groups feel, and derive power and strength from belonging to these groups. The new communal phase, as Tanika Sarkar argues, 'enables the woman's self constitutions as active political subject in dangerously unprecedented ways'.[53] For women who feel the need for religious involvement, and especially those whose men are involved in these organisations, this provides an opportunity to draw themselves out of a restrictive domestic space into a vast and virile environment. During communal riots in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad for instance, and in caste riots, women have played an active part marching and shielding rioters from the police. This seems to typify a general trend among the upper caste Hindus.[54] The underside of their participation in communal organisations is the militant assertion by women of their caste identity. In the recent massacre of dalits by upper caste Reddi landlords in Tsundur in Andhra Pradesh, Reddi women, for the first time, played an active, public role defending their men. Their defense, interestingly, was a collective public declaration that they (and there were three hundred of them) had been raped by the dalits in that village.[55]

Further, it would not be true to say that women are drawn into organisations by their men. Women have never been mere victims or passive recipients. They see themselves as crusaders for a cause -- protecting what they see as the identity and integrity of the nation; the cause of Hindutva. Women then are caught in a bind: between their democratic rights and gender justice on the one hand and the fact that their gender identity is tied to community/caste identity on the other. There is a sense in which they are trapped without a community. At another level assertion of community identity traps women. That is, we see that women's access to the 'larger causes' of nation or freedom is mediated by men, family and community. They are without nation. And one senses this tension in Mahatma Gandhi who made the struggle for freedom a sacred duty, raising it above family and community and thereby releasing women to enter the struggle. Yet, in countless individual cases he advised women to wait and obey parents or husbands who were willing to let them go. In times of upheaval women find legitimate space which disappears in conditions of normalcy leaving them again within/without community. We cannot afford today to underestimate, even less ignore, the impact and strength of resurgence of communal and caste violence.

The complexity of the issues that concern us has several layers. On the one hand we need to be sensitive to the specific concrete realities and avoid the tendency to generalise or draw conclusions that would blur critical differences in experience. At the same time we are confronted with the fact that every incident in one part of the region sets off a succession of reactions and responses in the other countries. Rising fundamentalism in one country is immediately sought to be matched or used by its neighbours. The case at hand is the support given by the Hindu communal party, the BJP for Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh, who was denied freedom of expression by the Muslim fundamentalists of her country.[56] Thus, here one sees the attempt by the Sangh Parivar to support the demand for equality in another community but deny any form of equality in one's own community. One can also observe that the rise in communalism and fundamentalism is also closely linked to structural adjustment policies in religion. This has direct linkage to liberalization and privatization policies. Women are the worst sufferers of these policies. The next chapter takes on this phenomenon for analysis.

Women's Movements and Hindutva

Around the late seventies and early eighties the autonomous women's movement began to take shape mainly around issues of rape and bride burning. The groups that mushroomed in various cities consisted of women from left and liberal backgrounds, many of whom were professionals from middle and upper strata of society.[57] To focus attention on the issues, women walked the streets in protest marches and shouted slogans. The initial spontaneous protest marches led to more sustained activities such as counselling and support services.[58] Women from both lower and middle strata approached such centres for help in crisis situations. These centres subscribed to a pro-women ideology, which can be termed broadly feminist, although groups refrained from using this term. They challenge traditional and conservative role of women as subordinate partners within domestic and social relationships.

Although these women's groups remained small in number, the movement was highly visible as it received wide media publicity. This acted as a pressure tactic and the state was forced to respond. Women's issues were placed on the agenda of state-sponsored development schemes, social work programmes and sociological research. The government set up anti-dowry police cells to help victims of domestic violence. There were also several cosmetic efforts at legislative reform although the inadequately formulated laws did not have the desired effect.[59]

While the counselling centres remained at the crisis intervention level, several community groups and non-government organisations (NGOS) formulated programmes to address economic issues of concern to women, particularly in the unorganised sector. Some of these NGOs were headed by women who subscribed to this new ideology and hence were able to transgress the narrow boundaries of 'women's welfare' and incorporate the new concept of 'women's empowerment'. Although they did not directly challenge the subordinate role of women within marriage, or address 'personal' issues such as domestic violence, they indirectly helped in the empowerment of women through development work.[60]

The autonomous women's movement focussed on issues which challenged patriarchal power structures within a broad liberal framework. There were several instances where the movement addressed issues concerning dalits, tribals and landless labourers.[61] Activists involved in the movement also provided relief during communal riots and worked in broad secular fora. During community conflicts and their resultant police excesses or during human tragedies, women's groups were able to place gender concerns on the agenda of human rights and civil liberties groups. But overall, the movement worked on the assumption that gender lines can be drawn up clearly and sharply in a patriarchal society and within these parameters sexual assault and domestic violence affect women equally across class, culture and religious barriers.

The leaders of this autonomous movement remained predominantly urban and upper class Hindu. Their work centred mainly in areas away from and outside their own immediate neighbourhood and community context. In order to reach out to women from a different class, caste and culture and to propagate the new ideology of the strong and assertive woman, the movement adopted a populist approach and relied upon mythical symbols of Shakti and Kali to convey the newly constructed feminist ideology. The movement relied more upon myths and fictions rather than on the history of a pluralistic society encompassed within its framework the cultural idioms of minority communities.

The intention of using the symbols from the dominant religious culture was not to propagate Hindu ideology. But since the movement did not have 'secularism' as one of its prime objectives, no conscious efforts were made to evolve alternate symbols. Hence the cultural expressions with which women who were in the forefront were familiar had surreptitiously crept into the women's movement. The feminist movement also had to constantly counter the allegation that it was 'Western'. So in order to establish 'Indianness' it relied on Hindu iconography and Sanskrit idioms denoting woman power, thus inadvertently strengthening communal ideology that Indian, Hindu and Sanskrit are synonymous.[62]

Within this social milieu of a high caste Hindu culture, handful of minority women who were vocal and articulate also internalised the dominant culture and hence did not protest against this trend. On the contrary, in order to prove secular credentials they willingly divorced themselves from their own traditions and cultural symbols of women's strength and power and accepted not just these symbols but also the food habits and dress codes of the dominant section.

Women and communal forces

With women's concerns gaining prominence in both governmental and non-governmental organisations during the eighties, women's issues became an important agenda for all political parties. Initially political parties refrained from raising issues of domestic strife and male dominance within party organisations. The women who needed support against violent husbands or male colleagues had to approach women's organisations to deal with this issue. This conservative approach was maintained for traditional and reactionary reasons of preserving the family but more in order to preserve the existing status quo among party cadres. But, over the years some party-affiliated women's organisations started addressing issues of women's oppression within the family through counselling centres.

In Bombay during the mid-eighties, the Shiv Sena which was gaining popularity within the lower middle class, was able to mobilise a large number of women around support activities such as income generation, crèches, and midday meals for children, civic amenities, ambulance services etc. The movement also appropriated cultural fora of public celebrations of Hindu festivals like Ganesh Utsav and Satya Narayan Pooja which had been popularised by Tilak during the nationalist struggle in pre-independence India. In addition, the 'sons of the soil' theory propagated by the Shiv Sena had also managed to carve out a special niche for women. As mothers of these sons of the soil the women were given a special role and responsibility: they had to defend their sons when the latter were arrested, and bring them up to be brave and loyal to the soil.

Through a systematic hate campaign the Shiv Sena was able to whip up communal tensions among their women cadres. The image of the modem Hindu woman which was constructed while advocating the communal Hindu ideology was not that of a traditional subservient and docile domestic being but a new modem Durga, the destroyer of evil, an angry and rebellious woman. This construction of the modem Hindu woman closely resembled the Indian construction of the new 'feminist' woman.

This new woman could come out on the streets with as much ease as the men could from the community to avenge their wrongs. And in this action she had the blessings of the party and community leaders. Hence women found this role not only exciting but also more comfortable than one which involved protesting against a violent husband or a rapist from within the community. In this latter role, they would not have the protective mantle of the party nor the blessings of community elders.[63] Through a process of selection, Hindu communal forces usurped the external usages popularised by the feminist movement such as protest marches and road blocks, while at the same time rejecting the movement's ideological stance. These resistances and revolts are contrary to the conservative domestic role of the traditional Hindu woman. The irony lay in the fact that the communal forces were able to mobilise women far more easily using the image of the modem Durga than the movement which had popularised these forms in the first place.

To its dismay the women's movement found that the new found strength, the shakti of the modem Durga was not directed against violence within the home and community but directed externally on distinctly: "I was not born a Hindu for the simple reason that my parents did not know that they were Hindus. This does not mean that I was born as a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist, a Sikh or a Parsee. My illiterate parents did not know that they belonged to any religion. My parents had only one identity and that was their caste identity. Their festivals were local, their Gods and Goddesses were local, and sometimes these were even specific to one village."[67] Ilaiah goes on to add that there are common village Dalitbahujan Gods, and Goddesses and caste-specific gods and goddesses. The Dalits do not know of Brahma, Vishnu or Eshwara until they enter schools.

The language that a Brahmin, Baniya or Kshatriya child learns to speak, all the social relationships that these children were supposed to pick up as part of Hindu culture are alien to the Dalit children. Kancha also draws attention to the unequal gradation among the gods. "Even a Brahmin family might talk about Pochamma, Marisamma or Ellamma, but not with the same respect as they would about Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara. For them Pochamma and Marisamma are 'Shudra' Goddesses and supposed to be powerful but in bad, negative ways. A Pochamma according to them does not demand the respect that Lakshmi or Saraswati do, because Lakshmi and Saraswati are supposed to be ideal wives of ideal husbands, whereas no one knows who Pochamma's husband is. This is the reason why even if a Brahmin invokes the name of Pochamma when there is smallpox in his house, it is only in a derogatory way. No Brahmin or bania child bears the name of Pochamma, while in our families these are revered names".[68]

The above stated facts highlight the basic differences that exist between the upper castes and the Dalits. It can be mentioned here that the unequal and obnoxious caste stratification has been transported to the realm of gods and goddesses. This also goes to establish the fact that there exists fundamental differences between the Dalits and the non-Dalits.

Dalits and the upper caste Hindus

Dalit children are socialized in two different types of social relationships and interactions. According to Kancha Ilaiah, at home, towards the Muslims -- both men and women. In this process the myth that all women are equal and could be mobilised around a common issue on a common platform lay shattered. The validity of slogans such as 'Sisterhood is Powerful' or *'Hum Sub Ek Hain'* (We Are One) was threatened. But what was even more distressing was that women from communal organisations mouthed slogans coined by the women's movement *'Hum Bharat Ki Nari Hain; Phool Nahin Chingari Hai* (We are the women of India, not delicate flowers but smouldering embers) while leading demonstrations during riots or while the Babri Masjid was being torn down.

Merging Demands

The merging of lines between communal forces and women's organisations did not stop at the level of symbols and slogans but also found an expression through some of the more concrete demands raised by the movement. Obscenity was one such issue. The second issue was the demand for a Uniform Civil Code. The women's movement had led a sustained campaign for reforms within the segregated and religion-based marriage laws and had pressurised the state to evolve a non-sexist secular code. This demand found an echo in a similar demand by communal forces.[64]

Thus, the communal forces brought to fore the symbol of 'mother' both in the rise of the 'sons of the soil' agitation spearheaded by the Shiv Sena in Mumbai and in the role of 'providing food' to the demolition squad (kar sevakas) at Ayodhya. Here the 'motherly role' of women were explored and utilized. On the other hand, they also brought to full blow the Durga and Shakti symbols in the communally volatile situations. At this location, they projected the 'assertive role' of women. But at the same time, when it comes to women's role at home and family, they took recourse to traditional *sati-savitri*, Sita like obedient and chaste wife, mother and women. Finally, at this level they opted for 'feminine' role of women.

In this entire process, the competence of the Sangh Parivar needs to be subjected to a serious analysis. It is reported that the women played a major part not only in terms of numbers but also in mobilising resources in the rath-yatra. Many of them even donated their *mangalsutras* (sacred marriage necklace) in the name of Ramlala.[65] There is surely religious sentiments behind this extraordinary behaviour. But there are other important reasons behind such an act. Amrita Basu in her discussion of Sadhvi Rithambhara and Uma Bharati: "It may be liberating for women, who are continuously enjoined to be decorous, to be praised for their good citizenship when they deliver loud, angry, and coarse public speeches. In public speeches, their use of vulgar expressions and their ability to address men with familiarity and condescension transgress traditional gender roles and expresses both their anger and their power".[66]

This is all the more true of the middle class women, who mostly remain as 'house wives'. It is this segment of the population, which has time and financial resources at its disposal to engage in the 'religiously-political' activities. The serialization of epic dramas provided them enough religious as well as political opportunities, which finally enabled in their mobilization for communal activities. In this aspect, the communal forces were much more successful than the women's movements, since the mobilization of women for gender issues divides on the basis of caste, class, religion, region and race. It is this primordial affiliation that needs greater sociological analysis.

B. HINDUTVA AND THE DALITS

> *If I had the power in my hand, I would have hung those Dalits by their legs and beaten. Their hands which disrespected the martyrs would have been cut off. If I had the gun in my hand, I would have killed them by bullet. Had I been **Durwasha**, I would have reduced them to ashes. If I had the law in my hand, I would have kept them in prison for life. Again, if I were the Chief of Army, on the first day itself, I would have stopped their reservation by force.*
>
> **Bal Thackeray**

For ages, an unequal and antagonistic relationship existed between the upper caste Hindus in general and the brahmanical society in particular on the one hand and the Dalits on the other. Kancha Ilaiah in his book, *Why I am not a Hindu* expresses this phenomenon distinctly: "I was not born a Hindu for the simple reason that my parents did not know that they were Hindus. This does not mean that I was born as a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist, a Sikh or a Parsee. My illiterate parents did not know that they belonged to any religion. My parents had only one identity and that was their caste identity. Their festivals were local, their Gods and Goddesses were local, and sometimes these were even specific to one village."[67] Ilaiah goes on to add that there are common village Dalitbahujan Gods, and Goddesses and caste-specific gods and goddesses. The Dalits do not know of Brahma, Vishnu or Eshwara until they enter schools.

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Dalits and the upper caste Hindus

Dalit children are socialized in two different types of social relationships and interactions. According to Kancha Ilaiah, at home, the father, mother and the children are equals, eat, drink and smoke together as equals. But they teach the children to fear and to obey the upper caste landlord, the Brahmin or the Baniya. This is not out of love or respect. But 'My son, be careful with that bastard, pretend to be very obedient, otherwise that rascal will hit us in our stomachs'.[69] The term 'stomach' is used in double senses. On the one hand it refers to naked physical battering, and on the other hand it refers to the economic blockade the upper caste can impose by refusing to pay wages, refusing to give loans and refusing to be benevolent.

It is this existential fear that enforced strict subservience to the upper caste zamindars. The upper castes on the other hand utilized this situation to demand unhindered obedience. Kancha continuing in the same vein argues that the child pretends to be obedient as Gandhi pretended to be poor. But a pretence that started at an early age becomes part of a person's behaviour during a lifetime. Fear of the upper caste is internalized.[70] It is this aspect that needs to be observed and understood so that one can meaningfully comprehend the relationship between the upper caste Hindus and the Dalits.

Jotirao Phule in course of his life and *Satyashodhak Samaj* activities moved from a reformist nature to a distinctive form of radicalism. He argued with the others that the Brahmins as a caste might be held responsible both for the condition of the low castes and for the backwardness of Hindu society itself. He also had differences with the Brahmin members of the Samaj who insisted that the lower castes should be given only the basic skills of reading and writing, but Phule insisted that they should be given a thorough education, and get from it the power to distinguish between good and bad.[71] Mahatma Phule also saw very clearly the conspiracy worked out by the Brahaminical order. He asserted, 'The different areas of Brahman activity – in the religious and economic life of the village, in the new local and provincial political institutions, in the religious reform societies and the social reform movement amongst Brahmans – were but varying manifestations of an essentially unitary force. This force waged a hidden war on these different fronts to maintain the power of Brahmans as against other social groups, and appeared in different guises the better to confuse and mislead its victims'.[72]

Dr. Ambedkar was also of the view that Brahminism was a poison which had spoiled the Hindu religion. According to him, it meant negation of the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity.[73] Hence, he continued to wage a relentless war against the brahminical order and for the establishment of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Even in the field of literature, the Dalits wanted to furrow their own path. Addressing a meeting at the Ambedkar ground, Prof. Keshav Meshram, a well known Dalit writer, caustically remarked that the epic ***Ramayan*** was written because one bird was killed, whereas Marathi literary figures had not given heed to the atrocities committed against Dalits for thousands of years. Thus the Dalits's wish to overthrow the literary and intellectual monopoly of the caste -- Hindu Marathi writers served as an impetus to the Dalit literary movement.

Taking the emergence of the Hindutva force seriously and its adverse effects on the Dalit Movements in general and Dalit Cultural Movements in particular, Gopal Guru argues that these movements carved out for themselves a culturally vibrant identity. But he bemoans the fact that, " Unfortunately today what we experience is that the Dalit cultural movement, more particularly its literary component represents the regression in the cultural landscape that once provided a radical context to the emancipatory politics of the Dalits in Maharashtra. This cultural regression among the Dalits of Maharashtra is evident from the threat of Hindutva homogenisation of the Dalit culture on the one hand and the literary stagnation and its subsequent cooptation by the state on the other.[74]

Any serious discussion about the emerging Hindutva force and its relationship with the Dalits automatically raises this question 'Has not the brahminical social order been totally wiped out?' This question is especially raised about those regions where Dalit and anti-Brahmin movements have been very powerful for many decades. Due to consistent anti-Brahmin movements in states like Tamil Nadu, the Brahmins had to run away from there. But have not the absence of the oppressive Brahmins led to an end the brahminical social order? Was the anti-Brahmin movement devoid of any egalitarian goals?

Here Chandrabhan Prasad points to a basic social process inherent in the caste order. According to him, "Shudras or Kshatriyas-led anti-Brahmin movements only seek to replace Brahmins from the seat of power. Once the Shudras or Kshatriyas gain political power, they tend to establish absolute monopoly over resources, and turn hostile to any kind of pro-active policies. Once they have established their dominance over economy and politics, a new search for a Brahmin-like socio-cultural hegemony becomes inevitable. The Dalits, the erstwhile co-travelers of that anti-Brahmin movement, who have remained landless in the Tamil society, are victims of a new form of social oppression. Brahminism by Brahmins has always been bad, but Brahminism by non-Brahmin castes could be worse.[75]

Once again this powerful and forceful social and historical truth is established that in the final analysis the Dalits are further marginalized and dehumanized. In the past they had only the Brahminic social order as their oppressor and exploiter, but now they are enslaved by two equally powerful oppressors. Since the backward castes to a great extent are similar to the Dalits in economic, political and cultural space till the recent past there was a possibility to forge an alliance to fight against the upper caste brahminical social order. But since they have climbed up the ladder due to land reform policies and other welfare measures, they have distanced themselves from the Dalits and have become the worst oppressors of the Dalits.

Dalits and Political parties

It is imperative that the Dalits and their leaders see through the game being played by all the mainline parties whether it is the Congress, the communists, the socialists or the BJP. The Dalits have been used as vote bank of the political parties. Even after five decades of freedom, this socially, politically and economically deprived and displaced Dalit communities are constantly made use of by the political parties.

Party Position in Bihar's Scheduled Caste Constituencies

Party	1991	1996	1998	1999
JD	6	4	1	-
RJD	-	-	2	1
BJP	1	3	4	4
Samta	-	1	1	JD(U) 3
CPM	1	0	0	0
INC	0	0	0	0
Total	8	8	8	8

[Source: Prakash Louis: Bihar Social Forces Vs Political Compulsions.
- indicates non-existence of party, 0 indicates lost the election]

On April 14th 2000, on the 109th birth anniversary of Ambedkar, Sonia Gandhi kicked off the party's 'save the constitution' programme at Nagpur, Ambekar's birthplace and the ideological headquarters of the Sangh Parivar. Claiming that Dr. Ambedkar was inseparable from the Congress ethos, she said the status review move was a conspiracy to deprive Dalits and OBCs of the benefits given to them by Babasaheb's Constitution.[76]

Kanshi Ram's Bahujan Samaj Party of India, with a predominantly Dalit base, and the Samajwadi Party, with an OBC following, have hit the streets calling for safeguarding Ambedkar's heritage. The BJP caught unawares by all these moves of the opponents, declared sops for the Dalits. To counter Sonia Gandhi's rallies in Delhi and Nagpur, Mr. Vajpayee addressed a meeting in Delhi organised by the *Anuṣuchit Jati Morcha* of the BJP.

The upper caste character of Hindu nationalism became a greater handicap for the BJP in the 1990s because political consciousness among low-caste people over the Mandal issue was growing. After the 1993, the BJP decided to promote low-caste people in the party apparatus. Uma Bharati, an OBC became the chief of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha. Uma looks at herself as representing low castes as well as women. But the most important fact to be noted is that K.N. Govindacharya, a Brahmin, was the main advocate of the inclusion of an increasing number of low-caste people at all levels.

The RSS, which still holds sway over the BJP, is critical of caste-based reservation. It believes that justice can be guaranteed to weaker sections only when the entire society is imbued with a spirit of oneness and internal harmony. Artificial transformation through caste-based reservation would disturb this social equilibrium since it would create bitterness among various sections. The RSS believes in achieving social harmony through assimilation of low-caste people -- which means their conversion to samskaras that is good influences of a brahminical value system. With this perspective in mind, the RSS launched in January 1996 a programme called *Samarasya Sangama*, i.e., confluence for harmony, the professed essence of which was that RSS workers should adopt one village to promote social harmony among various sections through social assimilation.

Though the BJP harped on the RSS discourse on social harmony, the BJP admitted that existing quotas in favour of SCs and OBCs could not be put into question. But it tried to combine the caste criterion with other socio-economic parameters. Having assumed power in 1999, the Vajpayee government granted OBC status to Rajasthan Jats and included more than 50 castes in the OBC list. Now when it fears a backlash to its move to revive the Constitution, it has fallen back on reservation to woo the Dalits.

The Congress had done it for years and now the BJP is playing the same game. It is high time the Dalits, their leaders and their supporters should see through this game. The Dalit phenomenon will remain weak as long as they confine their demands to the creation of more jobs, positions and some short term benefits. They must not forget that the real change lies in the transformation of civil society and the nature of the state. Unless pressure is built up from the grassroots on the Dalit leadership, the latter will continue to sabotage the movement by compromising themselves with brahminical forces for the sake of power and position. Dalits should shun those leaders who prove to be unreliable in the long run.

The Dalit movement must presage genuine emancipation. The proponents should realise the need to align themselves with class and gender struggles based on transformative politics. The Dalit movement, to achieve its goal of demolishing the caste order, must offer a sustainable challenge to Hindutva forces.

Chandra Bhan's distinction between Brahmin and Brahminism contributes in this direction. An anti-Brahmin mobilization only seeks to bring to end Brahmin dominance, whereas anti-Brahminism seeks to abolish the brahminical social order. The former is the doctrine pursued by the non-Brahmin castes, which includes the OBCs as well, while the latter is the doctrine pursued by the outcastes that is the Dalits.[77]

The BJP, which is the political front of Sangh Parivar, which talks about harmony and oneness itself, is divided on caste lines. 'Suddenly there appears to be no single BJP in the state but its several fragments such as a Brahmin BJP, a Dalit BJP, and Backward BJP, who are fighting for dominance as well as a position of prominence in the party.[78] This has once again thrown open a confrontation on the caste line for the post of party President of BJP in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP's national leadership wants to install either a backward caste or a Dalit on the 'sinhasan'. But the brahminical fold is not ready to abide by the high command and some of them have already thrown their hats in the fray. This once again shows the real face of the Hindutva force.

Before we conclude this section, let us briefly look at the ascent of the Hindutva force and the rise in crimes on the Dalits.

Atrocities on the Dalits

★ *12.2.2000.* Social Justice and Empowerment minister Maneka Gandhi and the Ambedkarites have locked horns again. The battle this time is over the centre's decision to wind up the Ambedkar Research Cell, a body set up to propagate Ambedkar's philosophy. In 1998, during her first stint as social justice minister, she got a portrait of Ambedkar removed from her office -- *The Telegraph.*

★ *15.3.2000.* Tension has gripped the village Dhoom Manikpur here following the recovery of the body of a minor Dalit girl, who was reportedly raped and then murdered -- *The Hindustan Times.*

★ *5.5.2000.* The Uttar Pradesh government today ordered a Crime Branch-CID probe into the killing of four labourers belonging to the Scheduled Castes at Basai village in Ferozabad District on the night of May 1. These were deaths by gunshots and attack by sharp-edged weapons -- ***The Indian*** *Express.*

★ *15.5.2000.* The genesis of current anger of some party MLAs against the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Ram Prakash Gupta, has its origins in cases of Harijan atrocities in Fatehpur district. There were two cases of beating of Dalits and in one case his relatives were involved. After police got a case registered and a Deputy Superintendent of Police started the investigaations, the minister's relatives approached him. The minister demanded the DSP's transfer alleging that the officer had insulted him -- *The Statesman.*

★ *18.5.2000.* A 40 year-old Dalit agricultural labourer was tortured and humiliated before being shot dead in front of his wife and others at Kabaraut village, 35 km, from Muzaffarnagar, allegedly by some influential persons, on Tuesday evening. The denial by the agricultural labourer, Samendra Sain, to hand over his patta (land), on which he had grown wheat and was haravesting the crop, to members of an upper caste family apparently provoked the latter to torture him to death -- *The Times of India.*

★ *18.5.2000.* A 25 year old Dalit is reported to have died in police custody in Fatehpur Sikri, last night. The man identified as Rajan, had been arrested by the Fatehpur Sikri police yesterday while he was about to register his marriage with a girl belonging to another caste in Jaipur. The police had tried to arrest the couple from Balmiki colony in Mathura, but the attempt had been thwarted by opposition from the residents of the colony. He was killed in custody -- *The Statesman.*

★ *23.7.2000.* Ranvir Sena has killed 228 men, women and children in 20 massacres till now. Majority of them are from landless agricultural labour class of the Dalit castes and some from poor peasants belonging to the other backward castes -- *The Hindu.*

★ *28.7.2000.* In a shocking incident of torture, a Dalit man was kidnapped, beaten up, burnt by cigarettes and finally had acid poured all over his back simply because he had the guts to complain about power theft in his area. As if that was not enough, he was then forcefully intoxicated and thrown into jail on the basis of a false case. His crime was that he had dared to complain to the Delhi Vidyut Board officials several times about power theft by factories of the area -- *The Pioneer.*

While, the atrocities on the Dalits have been on the increase, the ruling party continues to shy away from this issue. It is also significant to note that Suraj Bhan, a prominent Dalit leader and also the Governor of Uttar Pradesh was uncremoniously shunted out to Himachal Pradesh because he raised questions about the increase in atrocities on the Dalits in Uttar Pradesh.[79] There have been reports that the murderous Ranvir Sena gets its support from the Samata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party in Bihar. Though the Sangh Parivar has done nothing to put an end to these types of atrocities, it has been continually wooing the Dalits as vote bank. The report given below exposes this fact.

★ *2.5.2000.* Not to be outdone by the Congress, the BJP is singing paeans to Babasaheb Ambedkar to woo the Dalits. The BJP appears keen to shed its image of a party dominated by upper castes after the setting up of a Constitution review commission, the fears it has generated in the minds of the Dalit parties and the Congress propaganda that it was an anti-Dalit move. On April 14, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi addressed a Dalit rally in Nagpur and used the occasion for BJP-bashing. The same day the BJP organised a Dalit rally in Delhi which was addressed by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. But the response to the meeting was tepid -- *The Telegraph*.

Cultural Manipulations

At this juncture one also needs to examine the various game plans employed by the Sangh Parivar to maintain its hold over the Dalits. In this regard it is not confining itself in the Hindi belt, but is moving into south India. To cite an example, the RSS has initiated different educational and developmental activities in the slums of Chennai. A youth of Munnusami Nagar of Chennai stated, "the RSS introduced North Indian ceremonies like Rakshabandan and Ramnavami in our slum to show that we are all Indians; our Ambedkar Night School was renamed into Hindu Samrajya School, where classes would begin with the slogan of 'Jaybeem' and end with abusing the Muslims. They taught us to say that RSS is our mother and the BJP our father. They also claimed that Ambedkar was a RSS activist and distributed key chains bearing the image of Ambedkar".[80]

It would be simplistic that the Dalits and the downtrodden are not aware of the cultural manipulations of the Sangh Parivar. On the other hand they clearly and categorically see the maneuvering that goes on in the name of building a strong and prosperous nation. A Dalit youth of Triplicane, another slum in Chennai asserted that, 'The Brahminical oppression is pervasive in all fields. They control the cultural sphere like Carnatic music. But above all, to divide the Dalits they have corrupted our leaders. Despite political differences, the Brahmins keep their caste unity in tact. Our Chief minister takes pride in stating her caste in the Legislative Assembly. It is their unity and pride of belonging to an upper caste which give them the strength to hold on to power and deprive us of our right to organise and assert'.[81]

In conclusion, it needs to be asserted that the champions of Hindu nationalism, that is, brahminical communal nationalism have kept the Dalits and the toiling masses at bay for centuries. But with the induction of right to vote, the Hindutva forces needed the electoral support of the Dalits and the poorer section of the population to rise into the political arena. Hence, they began to court the Dalits in general and their leaders in particular.

The earlier electoral plank, that is, the Ramjanmabhumi issue converted the Ram bhakts into votes. Most of the bhakts were ordinary, illiterate and downtrodden masses. But after the demolition of the Masjid, the Ayodhya faded away from the minds of the voters and they even voted the BJP out of power. This defeat was suffered at the hands of those parties who have taken the cause of the backward castes and the Dalits. Hence, at the celebrations of the first anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1993, the obligatory panel of RSS and VHP leaders was flanked by two equal-sized images of Ram and Dr. Ambedkar, the pioneer spokesman and organizer of Dalits. The entire theme of Hindutva was significantly downplayed, and most of the leaders were instead busy showering praise on Dr. Ambedkar and condemning the practices of untouchability. [82]

The game plan of the Sangh Parivar is all the more clearly expressed by the Vishwa Hindhu Parishad leader Ashok Singal, 'For us Hindu means all those religions which have come up from this soil of Hindustan. Dr. Ambedkar upheld the spirit of this country when he stopped the flow of Dalits into foreign religions like Christianity and Islam by propagating the Ideals of Buddhism. That way he contributed greatly to the Hindu Dharma. And that is why we consider him one of the pioneers of our ideology and our movement'.[83] By this statement, the VHP leaders have achieved more than one goal. He has tried to coopt Ambedkar too into the brahminical fold. This can be called 'Brahminization' process.[83] They have also made it appear that there is no antagonism between

Brahminism and Buddhism. And above all they have established this myth that except the Christians and Muslims all the rest belong to the Hindu fold. By projecting the Muslims and Christians, the VHP leaders have also kept in tact their regular vote bank. This game plan needs to be seen clearly by the Dalits so as to fight for Dalitsthan and against brahminical communal nationalism.

C. TRIBALS AND THE SANGH PARIVAR

> *The Jharkhand struggle itself found its base in the concept "Jharkhand" right from 1950, though the self-determination struggle is few centuries old. But when the Hindutva force realized that the Jharkhand struggle as well as Jharkhand itself is slipping out of its hand, it projected vananchal from 1990. The main social base of vananchal movement is the big business companies. But they managed to mobilize the small traders, petty businessmen (teli, sahu, bania) around the notion vananchal. It is these petty traders who are the exploiters of the Tribals in the rural areas. The mobilizational initiatives came form the RSS. The vananchal proposal came as a major boon for the petty traders whose activities have been restricted due to the emergence of Jharkhand, AJSU struggles. With the weapon of vananchal these forces created division within the Tribals in the name of Tribals and Christian Tribals.*
>
> **Prabhakar Tirkey**

The Tribal societies in India have a very ancient and alive history and heritage of their own. They have their own cultural, religious, social, economic and political structures that have been handed down to generations for centuries. The indigenous people's myth, stories, tales and songs abound with explicitations of their social, political and cultural organizations. Nature, environment and ecology play the most important role in their lives. They have developed their religious beliefs and practices around these life-giving forces. But it is most inhuman that the 'so called modern and literate' society has termed their religion 'animistic'. This is once again a derogative term looking down upon the Tribal religious way of life.

Historical data confirm that the Tribals were the original settlers of the place where most of them live today or where their ancestors had occupied centuries ago. But their history has been one of exploitation, subjugation and marginalization. As the Tribals settled in the forest, related with the nature there and built up their social, economic and religious lives, the plains men through deceit, fraud and force took away years of hard labour and individual-collective toil and dispossessed the Tribals of their livelihood, culture and religion. But the Tribal communities did not die out in spite of oppression and exploitation. They continued to carry on their lives and their struggles.

In course of time, the Tribals had developed their own forms of political participation. This is usually known as '*Adivasi Swashashan*' that is, Tribal self-rule. This form of governance was based on the ideology, '*Hamare gaon mein hamara raj*', that is, 'We rule ourselves, our culture, our economy, our religion and our society, which is both local and regional'. But this well-knit and well integrated Tribal self-rule was brought under alien rule from the outside forces entered unscrupulously into Tribal area.

It has been a love and hate relationship between the brahminical social order and the Tribal communities for centuries. Right from the beginning the hindutva force has considered and treated the Tribals as *junglees*, a term which ordinarily means 'forest dwellers'. But in reality it is a derogative word meaning 'an uncivilized person'. Moreover, it also means that this person can never make progress but will continue to live in 'darkness and underdevelopment'.

In the Jharkhand region, the East India Company became the Revenue Collecting Agent of the Mughal Emperor from the year 1765. Though alien invasion of indigenous people had been a practice, it is from this period a systematic and sinister plan was devised in the name of 'Tribal wellbeing and Tribal development' to loot, rob, rape and steal and subjugate the peace-loving and freedom–loving Tribal population. Though the Jharkhand came under the East India Company in 1771, it is the upper caste Hindus who penetrated in a major way into the Tribal region and thus begins the saga of exploitation and oppression. The non-Tribal upper caste Hindus began to enter into every aspect of Tribal life and since they were 'educated' they slowly and systematically captured every space available in the Jharkhand region. They control business, they control educational institutions, they are the administrators, they are the *court aur kachhari* (seat of judgement), and thus controlling all aspects of the indigenous people.

Table 3.2: Loss of Forestland for Development purposes, till 1971

Purpose	Area in Hectares
River valley projects	4,79,100
Agricultural purpose	250,06,900
Construction of Roads	57,100
Establishment of Industries	1,27,200
Miscellaneous purposes	9,65,400
Total	266,35,700

[Source : Indigenous Peoples in India, Sarani, Vol.1,1997, p 31]

The upper caste non-Tribal population plundered and pillaged the Jharkhand region. To give an example, the land alienated from the original settlers, the Tribals in the name of development have been massive. The table presented above displays the picture clearly.

In spite of limited resources left at their disposal, the self-respecting Tribals continued to fight against every forms of alien rule. From 1950 onwards, the Tribals initiated Jharkhand struggle to defend their '*jal, jungle aur zamin*', that is, their natural and man-made resources, the political system and their entire life situations. Though the leadership at different times betrayed the aspirations of the Jharkhand people, yet the Tribal masses carried on their struggle unhindered.

It is in this background, the Sangh Parivar entered the area with its *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams* and *Birsa Seva Sadans* and spread its influence. Building on the welfare work done by the saffron parivar, the BJP entered into the electoral fray without much success. But in the year 1990 it floated the concept of *vananchal*, with the explicit intention of splitting the Jharkhand movement and gaining political mileage out of it. It was also an attempt to *divide-et-empera*. Further this was a well thought out effort to eliminate the age-long Tribal struggle for self-determination. But the Tribals of Jharkhand have continued to fight against the plans of the right wing Hindutva force. The much publicized 'bringing the adivasis into the mainstream' did not cut much ice with the Tribals. It is in this background the interaction between the Tribals of Jharkhand and the Hindutva force needs to be analysed.

At this point one also needs to examine the basic issues that gave rise to Hindutva force in the Jharkhand region. The saffron wave has now become very perceptible in the Jharkhand region. Its phenomenal growth here can be attributed to two interrelated phenomenon which the Sangh Parivar utilized to the maximum. On the one hand, the Sangh has managed to build on the cleavage between the Tribal and non-Tribal population. On the other hand, the saffron brigade exploited the division that was emerging between the *Sarna* (original Tribal religious and social communities) and the Christian Tribals. The difference between these communities came to be well pronounced with the advancement of educational, health and other facilities that were in general denied to the Sarna Tribals but extended to the Christian Tribals.[84] The harsh stand taken by the Church authorities in this regard alienated the Sarna Tribals and thus the void increased between the two groups of Tribals.

·The Sangh Parivar carefully and consistently built on the alienation of some tribals and roped in the non-Tribal as well as the Sarna Tribal communities as its basic constituency in the Jharkhand region. It is this social reality which provided a political platform to the BJP to establish its roots in Jharkhand. It also in a latent way offered fertile ground to the Sangh Parivar to consolidate its membership. Interestingly, it is from the drought-prone and poverty stricken Palamu district of Jharkhand region, the highest number of Dalits and Tribals were taken to function as 'Kar Sevaks' (demolition squad) at Ayodhya. The table given below highlights the phenomenal growth of the BJP in the Jharkhand region.

Table 3.3 : Party Position in Jharkhand Region Elections

Party	1991	1996	1998	1999
JMM	6	1	0	0
BJP	5	12	12	11
JD	2	0	0	[RJD] 1
CPI	1	0	0	0
INC	0	1	2	2
Total	14	14	14	14

[Source: Alex Ekka: Jharkhand Movement and the Elections]

There are 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the Jharkhand region. In the past these used to be shared between the Jharkhand parties and the Congress. But from the 1991 general elections, the BJP has registered spectacular victory and has managed to maintain its vote bank.

To attain a comprehensive picture of the interaction between the Tribals and the Sangh Parivar it is not just the economic and political exploitation of the Tribals of Jharkhand that should be examined but the cultural alienation of the Tribals also needs to be investigated. Instead of entering into a lengthy debate on cultural alienation of the Tribals we present the mindset of the brahminical force towards the Tribals. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Commission presents 8 features of the Tribals which are unique to them. They are : Isolation in forest; Tribal dialect; Animism; Primitive occupation; Carnivorous diet; Naked or semi-naked; Nomadic habits; Love drink and dance.

The features of the Tribal communities as 'perceived' by the upper caste officials clearly depicts the derogative nature of their perception. Inherently human behaviour like meat eating, drinking, dancing and worshiping nature from where all the resources needed for human living is obtained become the negative obsession of the brahminical world. With a false sense of purity and pride the brahminical force looks down upon these basic aspects of another community which is different in its existence and essence.

Against this negative perception of the Tribals by the upper caste forces, Ram Detail Mound presents the following as the salient features of the Tribal communities: Casteless, Classless and Egalitarian Society; Community based Economic system; Symbiotic with nature; Democratic policy based on Consensus; Fight for dignity and self respect; Change according to the demands of the times; Accommodative History; People oriented art and literature.

This is the traditional, cultural and existential perception of the Tribals about their social system. Thus, there are extremely contradictory views about the Tribals, in the perception of the Tribals and the non-Tribals. Any interaction of the non-Tribals with the Tribal world is coloured by this phenomenon. The self-respecting Tribal population detests this condescending attitude of the non-Tribals. Hence, they have also coined a term ‘Dikhu" that is, ‘an alien or an outsider’. This term not only expresses the reality of non-Tribals being outsiders but that they are also shrewd exploiters of the simple and peace loving Tribals. It is this antagonistic relationship that has been going on for more than two centuries. The indigenous population in their usual Tribal senses of extending welcome to everyone welcomed the non-Tribals too. But the Brahminical forces instead of respecting the sentiments of the adivasis, exploited their cultural world. In course of time, they also economically and politically exploited them. As stated above, the Adivasis continued to agitate against the various schemes of the saffron brigade. It is in this broader framework one needs to explore the basic and fundamental differences that exist between the Jharkhand people and the Sangh Parivar, the proponents of vananchal.

The basic ideology behind the proposal of *vananchal* instead of Jharkhand is once again an attempt to reduce the Tribals of Jharkand into people without a history. The shift from ‘*adi*’ to ‘*van*’ is a change from a temporal and hence having history to a spatially fixed location, at present without history is another endeavour of the Sangh Parivar to reduce the Tribals to pre-historical era and to render them devoid of identity. (see Table 3.4) But the BJP made a ‘U’ turn from its earlier move of Vananchal and fell in line with the Jharkhand movement leaders to introduce a bill for a separate Jharkhand state. This is not any special favour done to the Jharkhand people, but it is due to political compulsions that the Sangh Parivar agreed to do it. The centuries old struggles of the indigenous people

Table 3.4: Differences between the Ideologies of Jharkhand and Vananchal

Jharkhand	Vananchal
Jharkhand is an outcome of self-assertion and protests of the Tribals of this region.	Superimposed by the Hindutva political party the BJP.
Jharkhand refers exclusively to the indigenous people who are usually called the Tribals.	Vananchal includes non-Tribals who came from outside and settled here.
Jharkhand denotes the original settlers that is the Tribals.	Vananchal means the forest-dwellers, which is also derogatory in nature.
One of the main line party, the Congress for the last four decades used the slogan of creating a separate Jharkhand State to capture the Tribal vote bank.	The BJP on the other hand, in the last one decade has been playing the triumph card of Vananchal Rajya to capture the Tribal vote bank.
The Jharkhand State that is demanded by the Tribal population consists of 25 districts carved out from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. Since, the Tribal population from this region was divided between these states under the into.	The proposed Vananchal Rajya consists only 18 districts of the South Bihar and thus would once again divide the Tribal population by the boundaries of the states.
Jharkhand identifies itself with the culture, ethos, religion, social relationships, self-rule and above all the *jal, jungle* and *zamin* of the Tribal communities.	Vananchal on the other hand, projects only the make-belief political boundary of a limited area.
The term 'Jharkhand' was bestowed on the Adivasi Mahasabha in 1950 in order to resolve the controversy between the Adivasis and non-adivasis who were residing in Jharkhand area for a long time. Thus it has become a symbol of tribal life and identity.	The name Vananchal was suggested by Devi Prasad Shukla a senior member of VHP. It refers to the geographical feature of the land. It is also identified with Ram's *vanavasa*, that is, Ram's 14 years of stay in the forests of this region. It also derogatively means the *vanars*, the army of Ram, made up of monkeys.

Jharkhand is not a mere cognitive word. It is an ideology that represents the existence and identity of the Tribals. It represents their life, world-view, tradition and culture. It also denotes the *jal, jungle and zamin*. It also refers to the *Sarna, Sasan and Akhara*. Finally it also highlights the centuries old oppression of the Tribals as well as the Tribal emancipation movements that have been going on unabated.	Vananchal indicates the political agenda of the Sangh Parivar and BJP in a special way. It is part of a slogan to bring the region under the so-called 'national main-stream'. Would lead to Ramrajya and culminate in the Hindu Nationalism. In the name of dev-eloping the region it is a cunning device to dispossess the Tribals of their life sustaining resources of land, forest, water and culture leading to alienation of all kinds. It is a systematic attempt to marginalize the Jharkhand movement, Jharkhand leaders and ultimately the Jharkhand people.

[Source: Compiled by Prakash Louis from various sources]

of Jharkhand forced upon all the parties to speak in one voice in favour of the proposed state. Thus, once again the strength of the Tribal communities has been established with the formation of Jharkhand State.

Before we conclude this section of our discussion, it is pertinent to dwell briefly on the question whether Tribals are Hindus. John Lakra in trying to answer the question, 'Are Tribals Hindus?' argues that the Tribals have a religion of their own, the *addi* (original) religion which is being known, nowadays, by the name of *Sarna* religion. According to him, with the revival of Hindu fundamentalism, the Sangh Parivar, however, in the context of a mass reconversion drive, is trying to make the world believe that the Tribals are Hindus.[85]

John Lakra on the basis of religious, cultural, and legal considerations argues that the Tribals are not Hindus. The Hindus have Scriptures like the *Srutis, Smritis*, the Epics, the *Puranas* and the *Darshanas*. The Tribals on the other hand have oral traditions in the form of Creation Story, *Karam* Story, *Asur Kahani* etc. The Hindus believe in *Nirgun* and *Sagun Brahman*, the Tribals believe in the Supreme Being whom they call *Dharmes* in Kurukh, *Singbonga* in Mundari and *Ponomosor* in Kharia. Besides the gods, the Hindus worship innumerable goddesses. But the Tribals have only the above mentioned Supreme Beings. Apart from these Supreme Beings they engage in worship of spirits, ancestral as well as guardian spirits. While the Hindus make pilgrimages to holy places, the Tribals do not do so since they do not have a single pilgrimage centre as they do not believe in this practice at all.

Hinduism is based on Varna or caste system on the basis of which the supremacy of the Brahmans has been established. Hinduism rises or falls with the caste system. But the Tribal society does not have caste system. The Tribal society is divided into different tribes and the tribes into clans. There is no superiority and inferiority among the Tribals. The Hindus burn their dead, while the Tribals bury their dead. Thus, there are fundamental differences between the Hindus and the Tribals. Even constitutionally, the Tribals are different from the caste groups since the Constitution itself makes provision for Scheduled Tribes. The Hindu Marriage Act and the Hindu Succession Act make it quite clear that the Tribals are not included within the class to whom the Act applies.

Looking at the assertion that is emerging from the Tribals, John Lakra states that, a few years ago the Hindu zealots went about writing on the walls all over the country, '*garv se kaho hum Hindu hain*', (say with pride, 'We are Hindus'). To this slogan, the Tribals in Ranchi retaliated with their slogan, '*garv se kaho hum Sarna hain',* (say with pride, "We are Sarna'). The Sarna intellectuals went one step ahead and in March 1997 declared, ' *Sarna adivasi na to Hindu hain, na to Sikh-Isai hain, aur na to Musalman hain*' (The Sarna Adivasis are neither Hindus, nor Sikhs-Christians, nor Muslims). Thus from the above presentation it is clear that the Tribals are not Hindus. The jargon, 'Tribals are Hindus' is directed by the Hindus against the influence of the Christian missionaries on the Tribals, yet it ultimately goes against the Tribals themselves, because by imposing their own values on the Tribals these Hindus negate the very existence of Tribal identity and religion.[86]

Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion it becomes clear that Dalits, Tribals and Women have not been part of the society and also never part of the upper caste worldview. Even as early as 1881 Census enumeration, a bias against the lower castes was recorded. The Census enumerators could not situate the low castes and the tribals in relation to the religion. It is reported, "Many of the more bigoted high caste Hindoos employed as census enumerators or supervisors objected to record such low persons as of the Hindoo religion. This was illustrated by numerous instances brought to my notice of such persons having been recorded as of the Dher, Mang or Chandal religion by mere repetition of their caste in the column for religion. Possibly some in their humility and ignorance may not even have claimed to be of the Hindoo religion. More probably they were not even asked".[87]

This bias against the downtrodden continues even today among the brahminical social system. Hence, any attempt to introduce changes within the existing system will lead only to reform and not for total restructuring of the society. The Sangh Parivar by its manipulating politics has challenged the downtrodden communities to move in the direction of annihilation of the caste hierarchy on which the brahminical communal nationalism has built its edifice. Moreover, the search for alternative in the line of Dalitsthan, Jharkhand, autonomy and independence of other Tribals and the underprevileged people spread out throughout this country should be seriously pursued so that the brahminical communalism could be arrested and eliminated.

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25. For a detailed discussion of these competing models of equality, and the ways in which these approaches have informed Indian Constitutional law, see Ratna Kapur and Brenda Cossman 'On Women, Equality and the Constitution: Through the Looking Glass of Feminism, 1993, 1 NLSI.
26. For the protectionist approach, see R. S. Singh v. State o Punjab, A 1972 P & H. 117. For the sameness approach see C B Muthamma vs. Union of India and others, A 1979 SC 1868. The corrective approach has had only a margin influence: Partap Singh v. Union of India A 1985 SC 1695. See general Kapur and Cossman, and especially 'Women, Equality and the Constitution', op.cit.
27. A policy statement from the BJP National Executive Meeting, January 198 Chandigarh states that 'The Bhartiya Janata Party urges the... Government to s conduct itself that no citizen gets any feeling that he is discriminated against or unfavourably treated.'
28. Kapur, Ratna. and Brenda Cossman, in Tanika Sarkar, Ibid, p 95.
29. Golwalkar, M.S. Bunch of Thoughts, Banglore, Vikrama Prakashan, 1966, p.1
30. Ibid. p.18.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid. p.p. 19-20.
33. Seshadri further develops this analogy of family: 'The young child in t family holds the parents and his elders in high regard, but the elders do n treat the child as low. Similarly, there can be inequality on the basis intelligence and wisdom. But the Hindu view point does not allow to treat them as higher or lower classes'. Sheshadri, op.cit. p.113.
34. Ibid. p 115.
35. It is important to recognise that there is no clearly uniform position within Hindutva discourse, but rather an array of positions ranging from the more

progressive to the more fundamentalist. For example while some of the more authoritarian statements from RSS ideologues such as Hedgewar a Sarvarkar appeal to the laws of Manu, just as contemporary sants a sadhus within the BJP agitate for a return to Manu, moderates within t BJP, as well as the women's wing of the BJP and the RSS deny any support for such a reinstatement.

36. 'Our Commitments' op.cit., p-25. For a discussion of this matri shakti identity for women in RSS ideology, see Ish Mishra 'The Women's Question' in Communal Ideologies: A Study in the Ideologies of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and jamaat-E- Islami', Delhi, Centre for Women's Development Studies, n.d.
37. To a somewhat lesser extent, Hindu fundamentalists also offer women a renunciatory mode of existence, which allows women to escape from the domesticity that has been available to them. It is this renunciatory mode that has created the possibility for women such as Uma Bharati and Sadhvi Rithambhara to occupy such a high profile position within the Hindu right. At a more community based level, the Rashtrasevika Samiti-the women's wing of the RSS-provides intellectual and spiritual training for women, thus both affirming their religiosity, and providing them access to a world of knowledge and spirituality from which they have been excluded. It is, however, important to recognise that the Samiti is careful to ensure that the power of the family to make decisions regarding its members, particularly regarding its female members, remains unthreatened, and the decision for a woman to marry trumps her own decision to participate in the Samiti. Thus the renunciatory mode does not completely escape the role of women as matri shakti.
38. 'Women Ram Bhakts Make History', Dashak ke jharokhe Main, Delhi, Mahila Morcha, BJP, 1991, p.112. See also the following statement by P K Roy, 'Operation Ayodhya' in Nation's Hope'. . It look them (kar sevaks) six days to reach the periphery of Ayodhya, accepting the hospitality of the villages on the way. Many elderly women blessed them before bidding them farewell. "I could not control my tears at such send off by villagers for whom we were strangers. Despite their poverty, they looked after our every comfort, pooling their resources. Women collectively prepared food. And they forced food packets on us for the way," said one kar sevak'. Roy, op.cit., p.16.
39. Bharatiya Janata Party, Our Five Commitments, 1984; See also Mridula Sinha 'Women's Equality-Miles to March' Organiser, September 1, 1985, p.7 regarding the position of the BJP Mahila Morcha on equality.
40. Women's Decade: Mahila Morcha Response' in Dashak ke jharokhe mein, p 120.
41. Wooing the half that matters. The Sunday Times of India, 21/1/1991, p 15.
42. Dashak ke jharokhe mein, p 3.
43. Ibid. p 4.
44. See Manini Chatterjee, 'Strident Sadhus: Contours of a Hindu Rashtra'. Frontline, January 16-29, p 4. See also an interview in Frontline, July 30, 1993, p 28, in which Swami Nischalanand identified 'the Hindu code,

family planning, the Sati Act' as three areas in which the government unduly interfered in religious matters since Independence, and which must be undone.

45. As quoted by Shema Gandhi; 'Status of Women: The Other Casualty', Sunday Observer, February, 21-27, 1993.
46. Chatterjee, 'Strident Sadhus' op.cit., p.5. Swami Muktanand Saraswati for example was quoted as stating: 'There should be no laws regarding marriage. Today, a Hindu can marry only one woman while a man can have five wives. Why should a law be there? If a man wants to have 25 wives, let him'.
47. Many traditional discourses are as much a product of colonialism as modern discourses of liberalism. For example, notwithstanding the colonialist policy of non-intervention in the personal affairs of the communities, the extent to which personal laws were the prod complex history of intervention, codification and reform of customary practices is well documented: see Archana Parashar Women and Family law Reform In India, Uniform Civil Code and Gender Equality, Delhi, Sage Publications, 1992.
48. Sarkar, Sarkar, op.cit., 2062; see also Basu et al, op.cit., p 84-87.
49. Himani Banerji observes that the images of Muslim women in Hindutva demonstrate the ultimate version of contempt for women. Muslim women are portrayed as 'ignorant and superstitious slaves of Muslim men', who 'breed like rabbits, and are incapable of knowledge or spirituality'. See 'Women Against Communalism', Sanchetana, February 1991, (Calcutta) 2-3.
50. Kapur, Ratna and Brenda Cossman, in Tanika Sarkar, Ibid, p 106.
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52. The category of rape includes every act of sexual aggression on women.
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85. By Brahminization what is indicated is the attempt of the brahminical forces to coopt any one leader who was in the other end of the spectrum and posed challenge to the very hierarchical brahminical order. When the person is alive or dead the brahminical forces coopt them so as to bring to mainline those who followed the leader of the opposing camp. This is also being done with Ravidas and now with Dr. Ambedkar.
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> *The Jana Sangh's rhetoric was directed neither to the closed world of the village nor to the open world of India's modern cities but to the middle world between these two extremes, that of the rural towns, the provincial professions, small industry, and country trading and banking.*
>
> ***Bruce Graham***

Chapter IV

Hindutva Force and Economic Liberalization

Globalization is a process through which the imperialist powers want to control nations through the projection of global economy. Any discussion on globalization takes into account the need of reform. But often times reform is limited to economic reforms and that too limited to removing the bottlenecks from foreign investments and privatization of public sectors. The BJP and the Hindutva force have been constantly clamoring for changes in the preventive laws, similar to that or even draconian than the TADA that was introduced by the Congress government. But it has not even thought it necessary to bring up for debate the most crucial reforms like land reform and reforming of caste structure etc.

In his discussion on globalization and nation-state, Aijaz Ahmad states that reforms are necessary but the question is what type of reform is essential. Market as such is neither good nor bad; it simply is, and what is good or bad about it depends on the kind of market it is and the uses to which it is put. It can not be the duty of a responsible government to simply to submit the national market to domination by global finance. Both the market and the introduction of foreign finance has to be strictly guided from the standpoint of employment generation, extensive prosperity rather than intensive accumulation by the few, ecological needs of the environment, such social entitlement as education, health and nutrition, and the preservation of the independent capacity of the national state to undertake such guidance.[1]

Any debate on the economic policies of the Sangh Parivar and its political face the BJP needs to look at the slogan of '*swadeshi*' and the reality as its being unfolded in front of us. Even among the founders of the RSS, there were very rich persons. Among the directors of Bharat Prakashan Limited, a private limited company which sponsored the party organ the *Organizer*, there were men who came from rich background. There was a person who was the owner of many firms, a landlord, a banker, a merchant, an engineer and an advocate. The Sangh leaders themselves accept the fact that among its admirers there are a large number of big landlords and industrialists.[2]

Globalization

The term globalization used in 1985 by Theodore Levitt has assumed different meanings to different people. Roland Robertson speaks of globalization as a process by which the world is becoming more and more "a single place". At the risk of adding to the fragmentation in its connotation we can distinguish between two different generic classes of meanings attributed to it. A) The spread of human civilization, artifacts, institutions, patterns of living, information and knowledge to span the planet earth. B) A policy deliberately aimed at spreading certain institutions, modes of doing business, producing and trading commodities, services and information across all the states of the world. From this type of analysis we can distinguish the following features: 1) There is a spread of international trade in goods and commodities. 2) People migrate from one country or region to another temporarily or permanently. 3) Money or means of payment are exchanged on an increasing scale between different countries and regions. 4) Capital flows form one country to another to help produce goods and services. 5) Finance without direct link with production of goods and services flows between countries. 6) Trans-National Corporations or TNCs have replaced MNCs which increasingly engage in the activities listed above. 7) Technology is traded between different countries. With the WTO frontier technologies take an increasingly proprietary form. 8) The spread of print and electronic media. 9) The growth of international trade and production of services of all kinds like shipping, insurance, banking, health care and of course finance.[3]

Looking at the positive side of the globalization it is clear that globalization has led to a technological transformation which has resulted in international mobilization. Exchange of information, technologies, agricultural methods etc have led to decline in diseases, facilitated communication, increased agricultural production and have made home life more comfortable. It has also made human rights violations an international issue and has effected international solidarity. Unprecedented protest and opposition that was witnessed at Seattle against the WTO and its evil effects is an indication of the effect of mobilization that was made possible by transfer of information and information technology.

On the other hand globalization is also seen as a continuation of four centuries of colonialism. The current phase of globalization was shaped up by the strategies initiated by the 7 richest countries known as the G-7, now G-8 with the inclusion of Russia. The institutional exercises begun by the IMF and the World Bank were followed up by the establishment of the World Trade Organization [1st January 1995]. Thus globalization became synonymous with the economic hegemony of the rich people of the rich countries. The rich class of the poor countries also aligns with the profit seeking rich class and slowly mortgage the interest of their own country.

It has also been that in the emerging liberalization process the state goes through a change. The state no longer represents the interest of the nation but the interest of 'globalization' to the nation. And thus it represents the interest of the IMF, WB, GATT/WTO, and various International Financial Institutions. Thus it converts public capital into private capital by selling out the so-called "sick" units to the TNCs.[4]

Liberalism is understood as a radical conception of capitalism that tends towards an absolutist view of the market, transforming it into the means, the method, and the end of all rational and intelligent human behaviour and in the course of time the social behaviour. Based on this conception, people's lives, views, the function of the society and the policy and priorities of the government are subordinated to the market. Once this market becomes absolute it is unfettered, with no financial, labour, technological, administrative or human restrictions. This also in the course of time converts some ideas of the economists of modern capitalism into a total ideology. Liberalism is essentially an economic doctrine that gives paramount importance to macroeconomic variables such as growth and inflation with no attention to income distribution, job security, food security, environmental degradation, people's right or justice.

Some of the salient features of the process of liberalisation are:

The process of liberalism considers that economic growth as the primary and only objective of the economy. It forces the governments to abdicate their responsibility from providing the basic necessities to its citizens. They eliminate comprehensive programs to create opportunities for all with specific projects for specific groups. They privatize business based on the notion that ultimately, private administration is better for everyone. These policies open borders without restrictions to market, capital, and financial flows leaving the smallest and the weakest producers without sufficient protection. The cultural heritage of these places is also not taken into consideration. They insist on Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). These policies base their entire operation on the premises that the common good will follow in the long run without in fact making any provisions to the new problems the majority of the population is forced into. They eliminate barriers that could be imposed by legislations to protect workers in order to create incentives for private investment. They exempt the powerful groups from taxes and environmental obligations and shelter them in order to accelerate the industrialization process and thus creating an even greater concentration of wealth and economic power.

In all these attempts a myth has been created that if we let the market operate by itself then most of the economic evils affecting the country will disappear. This statement is based on the premise that the market not only exists independently of other social and political forces but that it is capable of exerting some kind of unidirectional causality. The idiom is **"change the market and the market will change the society"**. In reality, the objective of the market as a social organization is to facilitate the exchange of goods and services but the fairness of this transformation depends crucially on the forces shaping this specific social organization called the market. It has been demonstrated that the market is not an independent variable determining the extent and distribution of economic growth, but rather a residual factor that accommodates itself to the prevailing equilibrium of forces.

In the neoliberal system, the **state** becomes passive and retreats to the background. It becomes the promoter of market freedom, privatization of public enterprises and utilities. The **civil society** also becomes the sum of individual consumers whose preference must be respected. **Market** becomes the efficient device to allocate resources and thus finally allocates places too. In this entire process the producer, especially that section of the producer whose manual and mental labour leads to economic development and wellbeing of the society has no say in the fundamental economic decisions. The upper caste and upper class consumers who have always been riding on the shoulders of the toiling masses continue to decide the economic processes.

Very often this argument is presented that if we open up markets for external capital then development can be ensured in a decaying economy. But this half-truth hides more than what it reveals. One of the basic facts of this is that the foreign capital has tags and demands. Foreign investments have demanded: 1) Sovereign guaranty. This guarantees return of the capital and debt. 2) Even private debts are guaranteed. The implications are horrendous. Even a cursory glance at the nature and the role of external debt reveals the fact that debt is fundamentally aimed at restructuring capital in the 3rd world countries. These countries are capital starved nations and hence we provide capital for their development but in reality by providing some capital these benefactors gain more wealth.

There are 'Export Promotion Zones". In the export sectors we have new forms of bonded labour system in that there are no unions, no associations etc. It is also reported that the girls in fish processing industry are not allowed to go out freely. They are allowed to go out only for medical needs and not even for religious worship.

There is also an attempt to make the power and oil sector 'Sick Units' so that they could be disposed of to TNCs. This can be done only by a 'sick mind', which at the cost of the total society is only busy with its own well being. The only hope inspite of this depressing situation is that liberalization itself is running into lots of its own inner contradictions and ultimately they will eliminate it.

Impact of liberalisation on political leadership

The new leadership of Asia, particularly India, has sought legitimacy from its external policies that came to be identified with modernity and change. Thus a Rajiv Gandhi in India or a Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, and a Sheik Hasina or Begum Zia in Bangladesh sought to use the globally accepted concepts of democracy and technology for their legitimacy. These metropolitan elite leaders thrive on the support of foreign powers. But the rural masses continue to pin their hopes on Pawars, Rams or Yadavs. These are the subaltern leaders and thus their leadership is acceptable to the rural voters.[5]

Impact of liberalisation on Women.

Only about 10 per cent of women are in the organized sector. The rest are in the agricultural and allied activities. With the liberalization policy women will be much more affected than men. Because women through agricultural activities earn enough grain and ensure food security for the entire family. With the arrival of commercialization of agriculture wages will be paid in cash and not in kind. Also within the restriction on the variety of food crops, some kind of food will not be available to them any more. Change of food habits too will affect the women the most. Some of the food crops that were 'collected freely' will become 'owned' and thus out of the reach of the poor women, for example various forest food items.

Women's labour will be demanded only for export oriented production with all the other evil consequences that go with that. In the existing economic-set up though 50% of women's non-monetized labour is not accounted, yet the women had control over their labour power. Now they will lose out this too. In the new form of economic operation "efficiency" becomes an important element and thus those who are unskilled, under-skilled and semi-skilled, will be out of the entire economic process. This is the case in an ordinary economic set-up. But in industries like the food processing and garment export women will be employed and thus labour will get feminized. This also means temporariness of labour, contractual labour, (see Table 4.1) low wages, blocking unions and labour organizations etc.

Table 4.1 : Data about women labourers.

S.No.	Type of Workers	Male	Female
1.	Regular workers	109	-
2.	Contract workers	125	118
3.	Retrenched workers	244	230

[Survey done in Urla Industrial area near Raipur, Madhya Pradesh].

The whole aspect of creating "**new women**' or beauty queens out of India is also a systematic attempt to capture the Indian market with consumer or to be true cosmetic goods. This is becoming all the more open and powerful in a regime that claims to uphold the '*sati Savitri*' image of women. The recent Miss Universe Mukta Yuki first met Bal Thakre in Mumbai. But Thakre has problems about many other issues in the name of 'Indian tradition'. This is once again the double dealing of the Sangh Parivar. When our women take part in the beauty context it does not seem to go against the 'Indian perception of women', but when cultural mediums try to produce films on some issues reflecting women's real life situations then the Hindutva force create a hue and cry. The protest against the shooting of the film "Water" is one uch incidence of communal intolerance.

Globalization and its impact on Agriculture

With the arrival of WTO there is a thinking in one section of India that our export market in rice, wheat, fruits, flowers, vegetables and aqua products will have a boom. But on the other hand in Andhra Pradesh alone over 325 cotton growing farmers committed **suicide** in the month of November 1998. In Punjab the farmers committed suicide even as the paddy crop arrived in the market. In Karnataka the farmers committed suicide since the price of peanut crop crashed. These actions are due to rising debts related to higher inputs and diminishing returns. This epidemic of farmers' suicide is an indication of the stress the Indian agriculture is undergoing after the globalization. Mixed cropping has sustained the Indian farmers and the environment though the centuries. Organic manure has also sustained the cultivation for centuries. Bio-diversity had been part of the agriculture for a long time. But now terminator technology has taken upper hand. Commercial cropping pattern is replacing the traditional cropping pattern, which was labour intensive. In the traditional crop pattern the Dalits use to benefit since they atleast got some wages in agriculture occupation. Modernization of agriculture, urbanization and industrialization are presented as the hallmark of globalization. These outcomes of globalization may have benefited the upper castes and classes but has reduced the Dalits, Tribals and women from the lower rung to unbearable poverty and untold misery.

GATT [General Agreement on Trade Tariffs] was initiated in 1947 in Geneva. It is a sign of the contradiction inherent within the imperialist system; it is like the sick person desperately trying any remedy to prolong his life, with each remedy compounding the disease. Following from this the WTO [1988] came into existence. Under this India will have to abolish the Public Distribution System. Taken together these proposals are to safeguard the interest of multinationals and developed countries in the market of the third world countries. The MNCs which have become TNCs have an eye on the rural market. They are especially entering into controlling the seed trading. Some of the long term negative effects of globalization are spelt out below:

Commercialization of Agriculture and move against sustainability. Sustainable agriculture is based on judicious planning of natural resources such as land, water and agricultural biodiversity of plants and animals. But commercialization of agriculture is based on growing crops, which are in demand in the market, to earn more profit with or without caring for sustainability of the natural resources. In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh the farmers are shifting form food crops to sunflower, a cash crop. Fish farmers in coastal areas are commercialising themselves. Thus globalization of agricultural production is a distinct phenomenon based on exploiting natural resources and man-made resources. TNCs are getting interested in agriculture but for them sustainability is not the matter but profit is the only Gospel, Kuran and Ramayan. Pepsi Co. Ltd. has entered into a contract with the Gujarat government to use its land and thus these corporations will slowly take over the farms and landlessness of the disadvantaged group will be total.

Food Security: The first priority of any country is domestic food security and not export. Thus when the GATT proposals were being discussed the US rejected the proposal on the grounds that it would make US food security dependent on imports and thus place it in jeopardy. Today when they are controlling the WTO they are advocating that agriculture should be made part of WTO. This way the third world countries' markets will be forced to open up for the developing countries' trade. The hope offered is that the farmer will get fair price. But this rarely happens. It is the middlemen who are the beneficiaries. Farmers will have to buy seed every year from the TNCs. Globalization will homogenize food taste and this in turn will affect the types of crops to be cultivated. In India people know what to eat in the summer and what to consume in the winter. If these items are not produced then a total change will take place in health.

Here it is necessary to look at the patent laws. The **patent laws** are likely to inhibit the potential for domestic technological development. Patents are awarded according to who files for a patent first, rather than who actually has the knowledge or made the invention. This means that there is tremendous scope for intellectual theft and biopiracy. The patents that were filed in US for neem, turmeric and basmati are cases in hand. This also moves the research agendas from domestic production and food security to profit. **The Indian Patent Act 1970** means the exclusive right of the inventor to use his invention for a particular period, that is 14 years. The basic principle underlying the grant of patents is that the invention must be new and useful and capable of industrial application. This Act was supposed to encourage inventions.[6]

Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industries organized a two-day workshop in the first week of December 1999 to focus upon the Indian situation and the possible response of the industries to change the situation. For this they had invited the NGO's. They have become acutely aware of the fact that today one has to speak the social welfare language for the survival of the industry itself. Two most important aspects to which they paid attention were Education and Population. To narrate success stories the confederation had invited IAS officers from Andhra Pradesh. Another myth is being created today through the slogan that Andhra Pradesh is the 'most happening state'. In this regard some salient factors need to be highlighted. 1) Andhra Pradesh, the 'fast developing' state in India and the first 'cyber city' also has been paying its casual labourers of the '*anganwadi*' teachers Rupees 358/- per month and they went on relay fast recently. It is also interesting that Laloo Yadav commenting on the high-tech myth of the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister made a statement, 'Can Chandrababu Naidu provide pure drinking water to millions of villagers in his state?' 2) With regard to Population control the IAS officer stated that he has succeeded in having 80,000 operations. But the Indian memory is not short lived. During the emergency, there was forceful sterilization. History seems to be repeating itself. The BJP government is also contemplating of introducing education policy and population policy for the betterment of the country. Education policy to make higher education more costly so that even the limited number of students who manage to get educated now will remain semi-educated. The population policy is motivated by the unusual alarm created by 'population explosion'.

Some alumni of Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) have proposed to set up **1 billion dollar** that is *4,000 crore rupees* to privatize 5 IITs of India. A proposal is in the offing asking the government to hand over these IITs to them.[7] The high technology is the most subsidized higher education in India. Most of those who pass out from these institutions go abroad or join the civil services. Thus they either join the foreign citizens or become part of the ruling class of India. It is also significant that these persons did not think it fit to set aside some earnings of theirs for the literacy and basic education of the Indian population.

The TNCs will finally control also the vital sectors of **information and communication**. Apart form imposing their ideology of good life they not only promote their interest but also influence the very ethos, culture and life of a nation. This will ensure the hegemony of the ruling elite of national and international communities. This will ultimately lead to cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism is the systematic and sinister penetration and domination of the cultural life of the popular classes by the powerful section of the national and international ruling class, with the exclusive purpose of reordering the values, behaviour, institutions and identity of the downtrodden, to conform to the interests of the dominant classes. In this regard it is necessary to identify the difference between globalization and sustainable development.

Two Different World

Globalization	Sustainable development
Profit oriented	People oriented
No commitment to community	Critical consciousness raising
Technocracy over weighs	Human sensitivity
SAPs	Resource tenure improvement
Resource concentration	Resource availability
Green Revolution	Ecological rethinking
Rule of the elite class	Democratic participation
Free market enterprise	Distribution and consumption

Thus, there are basic differences between the people oriented sustainable development while the globalization forces would override the basic needs and the aspirations of the people.

Privatization of all sectors of the economy will affect the Dalits and the Tribals the most. Even the limited mobility guaranteed by reservation in public sectors will be closed once and for all. Privatization of education and withdrawal of subsidy to social services will make education unthinkable and unavailable. In sum, development means enhancement of all human capabilities, their growth into full potentials and overall growth of all human beings as well as the species. For this to be a success, the basic needs like food, nutrition, health, education, social security, participation in public life etc are essential. But in the globalization process profit becomes the dominating concern and human beings are treated only as far as they are useful in this market management.

Globalization and Hindutva Force

After Ayodhya, communalism has become the dominant ideology of the country's ruling institutions and classes. From 1991 communalism got wider support in terms of caste, class, capital and party affiliation. Historical records demonstrate that one has to choose between the **programmatic communalism of the BJP** and the **pragmatic communalism of the Congress.** In the 1996 elections forced by the pain and the agony of the Bombay riots after the Babri masjid demolition, the Muslim community in Mumbai decided to teach the Congress a lesson by voting for their own moral enemies the Sena-BJP combine. The Congress has been banking heavily upon the Muslims for vote. It took it for granted that the Muslims will never go in the way of the saffron. The Muslim voters demolished this 'taken for granted' belief. But now the Muslim community is looking for a political force that would safeguard its interest. This type of shift needs to be understood in a broader framework.

At this juncture it is expedient to comprehend the interaction between the Hindutva force and economic aspects of Indian society. There run two streams within the Sangh Parivar, with regard to globalization, liberalization and privatization. On the one side stand the older generation of RSS pracharaks -- highly critical toward liberalization and the prospect of India getting further entangled in global currents of trade, investment, and cultural products. On the other side stand a growing section of leaders and activists, especially in the BJP, many of them involved in private enterprises, who welcome the break with decades of semi-planed economy, and who regard liberalization and integration in the world market as the only viable course.[8] The saffron brigade continues its Janus face right from the beginning. The indigenous sense captures this sentiment powerfully in a Hindi proverb, "*hathi ke dant ek khane keliye ek dikhane keliye hain*", that is, there are two types of activities one for the public consumption and another for private sphere.

The RSS was well aware of the fact that unless class differences are not removed it is impossible to carry on with the nationalism project. Hence the political affiliate of the RSS, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh had proposed that the range of income should not exceed the ratio of 1/20. That is, the minimum monthly income should be 100 rupees while maximum should be 2,000 rupees. This proposal was first adopted at a meeting of the Jana Sangh Working Committee at Indore in 1954. But this proposal was discarded saying that the BJS has been captured by the RSS.[9]

The economic policies of the Sangh Parivar continued to change according to the line of political mobilization that the RSS took recourse to. Though the saffron brigade was involved in relief work during partition, it did it, as mentioned earlier because most of the refugees were Hindus. When it entered in cyclone relief in 1977, it began to see economic development as a tool of national integration. It is the interaction with the most deprived communities that led the Hindutva force to review its earlier policy. Thus, there is no inherent commitment to the downtrodden who also fall under its Hindutva fold. Moreover, the day to day activities of the Sangh also indicates the real intent and the social base of the saffron fold.

The shakhas offer facilities such as organized sports and a special type of feeling such as pride, group bondage, social ambitions etc that are scarce for the majority of youth who are caught in the urban vortex. While the upper caste, upper class youth have many avenues in terms of education, entertainment, and job opportunities it is the middle class and relatively better of poor class youth who are thrown into crisis. This unification of the youth who are presented with an identity of being a person from the majority community also provides other forms of identities. One of the ways it is done is by normalization of the practice of violence as a way of satisfying acquisitive desire and of imposing the will of the powerful on the powerless. An urban middle class that habitually sets its women afire because the dowry they bring does not satisfy that class; and also because they are not sufficiently submissive. The agrarian upper castes that periodically set fire to the households of menial castes normalise the idea of extreme violence in class and caste relations.[10]

In his discussion on the interface between Liberalisation and Hindutva, Prakash Karat is of the view that these are the new threats to national unity. According to him globalization is an imperialist sponsored process. This aggressive thrust of imperialism is both economic and political in its consequences. The imperialist sponsored globalization does not seek to dismantle the powers of the nation-state as a whole. It seeks to do away with the powers of regulating the economy and flow of capital while strengthening the repressive powers to suppress popular movements against big capital and police the working class. The Sangh Parivar's authoritarian vision of nationhood can easily accommodate the demands of international capital, as it concurs on the point that a strong state is required for creating favourable conditions for big capital.[11]

Prakash Karat goes on to argue that there is more than what appears in the breaking up the existing linguistic states. The BJP advocates this move on the basis that it would help in closer administration. But Karat is of the opinion that in times of liberalization, it will be easier for international and domestic capital to deal with small, fragmented state units. Thus the advent of a Hindutva-inspired party in power at the Centre with an authoritarian vision of nationhood coincides with the imperialist drive to erode national sovereignty. The successive Congress governments spoke of *garibi hatao* (remove poverty) but in reality reflected only the interests of the bourgeois-landlord class. The BJP in much severe form has surrendered the interests of the country to local banias and business groups and to alien market makers and managers.

This is not the entire picture. Though the BJP-RSS combine has surrendered the interests of the nation to globalising forces yet they regularly keep crying 'Swadeshi'. One can clearly see from the life style of some of the leaders themselves the double standard: '*swadeshi* in slogan and *videshi* in living'.

Aijaz Ahmad in his perceptive analysis of the present Indian situation asserts that the economic liberalization has vastly accelerated the creation of a pan-Indian culture of commodity fetishism which the electronics media is carrying far beyond the urban habitats of the bourgeoisie, fairly deep into the country side. This process, on the one hand creates more 'wants for consumer goods' within the affluent society and these are also satisfied since the affluent section of the society has appropriated enough wealth for themselves. This process on the other hand, generates enormous crisis among the middle class. The middle class due to its social conditions is influenced by the Hindutva forces but their needs can not be met since they do not possess the purchasing power. Going further he contends that the acceptance of supremacy of the market as the final arbitrator of the social good, combined with full commodification of competing religiosities, has led to a new eruption of the savage identities of caste and communities, which gets intellectual respectability from the indigenist scholars for whom secularism is the sin of modernity while savage identities of religion and community are the very essence of what they call 'tradition'.[12]

In another place addressing himself to the globalization phenomenon, Aijaz Ahamad is of the view that global finance is now so abundant and mobile that it is breaking down all national barriers, the possibility for further development in countries of Asia and Africa has now shifted from the initiatives of the national state to cooperative relationship between global finance and local entrepreneurs under the guidance of such international agencies as the World Bank, the WTO, the IMF and numerous multilateral agencies. In this situation in a third world country the government's accountability to its citizens diminishes while it becomes increasingly beholden to its creditors and balance of payments difficulties are cited as the reason for abandoning socially purposeful investment. But where the nation-state is stronger the capital of its citizens can move about without being obstructed. The TNCs of United States can invest any where since they could rely on the support including the military support that their nation could provide anywhere in the world'.[13]

The social base of the BJS also indicates the type of political interest the Sangh represented and the present avatar BJP represents and the Sangh Parivar generally represents. 'The Jana Sangh's rhetoric was directed neither to the closed world of the village nor to the open world of India's modern cities but to the middle world between these two extremes, that of the rural towns, the provincial professions, small industry, and country trading and banking. The party was successful in mobilizing the middle world, which is charactierised as being threatened from two directions: from above, by the competitive individualism and the secular values of capitalism and from below by the first expressions of urban and rural populism, the growing power of caste associations, and the increased militancy of the Communist-led trade unions'.[14]

While it comes to the upper caste, upper class social base, the Hindutva force always highlight their grievances. But when it comes to the interests of the lower caste working class, it call for harmony and 'adjustment'. The Jana Sangh's trade union leader D.B. Thengadi stated in 1965, 'According to Bharatiya tradition, every industrial establishment is an industrial family with all those working within it and its industrial coparceners. Workers, including technicians and managers, are the coparceners of their respective industries'.[15] This once again exposes the double dealings of the Sangh Parivar. When it comes to getting work done by the working population, it takes recourse to Bharatiya tradition. Otherwise, it apes the west in its policies and porgrammes. Moreover, it tries to present a false picture that the workers and owners, labourers and managers are equal in a joint family. The formation of a trade union under the banner of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) was to rope in the support of the working class into its objective of joint family structure. But in reality it warned the labourers not to join strike like the Communists or not to work against the 'national interest'. It is also significant that the first General Secretary of BMS, D.B. Thengadi was a RSS member in 1940s. Thus falsehood is presented as a reality and Hindutva force moves ahead in a country infested with enormous crisis.

The land reform policies of Jana Sangh also throw light into the real objectives as well as the interest group it represents. In its first election manifesto of 1951, the party endorsed the principle of individual proprietorship and set out a land policy which came very close to that favoured by moderate Congressmen. 'In the interest of increase in production and the betterment of the lot of the actual cultivator the party would take all steps to introduce land reforms so as to make the cultivator '*kshetrapal*' i.e., virtual owner of land. In the interest of the economy of the country the party would abolish Jagirdari and Zamindari with compensation and distribute the land to tillers. Enough land would be left with such Zamindars and Jagirdars as would settle down as cultivating farmers'.[16] This policy once again highlights the double dealings of the Sangh. Though the Jana Sangh sounded revolutionary when it advocated abolition of jagirdari but in reality it did not specify what is the ceiling limit of land reform. The talk of compensation itself indicates where the interest of the Sangh lies. Above all in the 1952 assembly election in Rajasthan, seven out of eight MLAs were jagirdars. Here it needs to be highlighted that both the Congress and the Jana Sangh ultimately represented and continues to represent the economic-political interests of the landed gentry.

The rhetoric *swadeshi* of the Sangh Parivar once again highlights the dilemma the Sangh parivar is entangled with. Hansen argues that, 'The saffron brigade borrowed a critique of multinational investments and the notion of *swavalambhan* (self-reliance) from the Left and the Gandhian discourse. Deoras the sarsanghchclak compared multinationals to the East India Company, and claimed that swadeshi was but the natural continuation of the anticolonial struggle; he called upon "patriots to shun everything foreign and prize everything swadeshi".[17] Hansen goes on to add that the swadeshi campaign of the RSS led to some crisis in the BJP's stand. The BJP had welcomed the economic reform policies of the Congress government. But the RSS's party organ the *Organiser* had hammered on the Congress government with articles titled, 'Bonded to the World Bank' etc. while the RSS was engaged in bombarding the Congress government's policies, the BJP on the other hand was worried that with the new economic policy, the Congress would make inroads and gain sympathy in its political constituency, the small traders and small industrialists.

In 1994, the Sangh Parivar launched the *Swadeshi Jagaran Manch*, with the stated objective of driving away the MNCs and the TNCs, and to oppose the liberalization process. BJP General Secretary K.N. Govindacharya was the brain behind this move. Thus, the RSS with the '*swadeshi*' and the BJP with the '*videshi*' (foreign) perpetuate the Janus face of the Sangh Parivar.

In this regard it is appropriate to pay attention to some of the pronouncements of the Sangh Parivar leaders. Dr. M. M. Joshi once wrote, "We will observe the Golden Jubilee of the 'Quit India' movement with the pledge to make India 'foreign debt-free'. Bapu called upon the British to 'Quit India'. BJP calls upon the Government and the People of India, to see to it that foreign economic interests end their strangulation of the Indian economy'. This document 'Towards a Debt Free India' that was prepared by three eminent economists focused not only on the economic impact of debt but on the political and social outcome of external debt. According to the BJP's perception, 'foreign loans carry with them extremely strong conditions. The lender ultimately decides how you should tax your people, how much you can spend on defence, how you have to retrench your workers, etc. Default leads to erosion of national pride. Indian ministers are forced to bend at the dictates of external lending agencies because there is no choice'.[18]

The above mentioned concern for the country was expressed by the BJP while it was in opposition. During the period 1991- 92 when Narsimha Rao and Manmohan Singh were at the helm and the BJP was the main opposition, the external debt was 75 billion US dollars, that is, Rs. 1,35, 000 crores at the rate of Rs. 18 per dollar.[19] Now when the BJP is in power its entire tall claim to restore the pride of the country by avoiding external debt has been conveniently forgotten. The external debt in September 1999, that is, during the rule of BJP was 98.87 billion US dollars.[20] This amount measures up to Rs. 4,15, 258 crores at the rate of Rs. 42.00 in September 1999. Thus, facts are stronger than fiction. The BJP government, which has been in power at the centre from 1998 onwards, has not been able to bring down the volume of external debt.

The BJP's think-tank had suggested that 'the finance minister instead of writing letters to the IMF and World Bank begging for loans, should draw up a programme for reducing the debt in a phased manner, cutting down on budget deficits and doing away totally with revenue deficits. That is why the BJP has drawn attention of fellow citizens to the close and continuing connection between *Swaraj* and *Swadeshi*'. This admonition to the finance minister of Congress Government was not put into practice by the BJP government now when it is in power. Given the globalization process it may be a difficult task for any political party in power, unless the party is ready to take some hard decisions and be ousted by the internationally and globally powerful forces. But the most important fact is that the BJP itself is not convinced of the need to do away with external debt. Its document states, ' the role of foreign capital will be limited, though it can be crucial at certain stages and for specified national goals. That is why the BJP is opposed to unfettered entry of foreign capital and multinationals, except in high-technology areas which are yet to be developed'.[21]

Going one step further, one can also look at the understanding of the BJP about the Dunkel Draft. Murali Manohar Joshi in his speech delivered in the Rajya Sabha on 6-2-1993 declared that "The Dunkel Draft is nothing but a repeat of what the East India Company did, how it fleeced and looted and the type of mechanism it evolved. The country revolted against that East India Company. Now Government is trying to bring it back. For God's sake, don't discriminate between sovereignty and slavery, between dignity and indignity, between self-respect and slavery. Don't destroy the tiller. If you have any self-respect in yourself, if you want to take out this country from the morass of indebtedness, if you want that this country should hold its head high among the community of nations, if you want the tricolour fly high in the UNO, do not surrender to this unique treaty. If you have any love for this country, for the interests of the county, for the poor masses of this country, I call upon the government not to sign this treaty".[22] The crocodile tears that were shed for the poor masses were only an electoral stunt. But this was done in the name of nationalism.

The above discussion matter once again exposes the double standard of the Sangh Parivar as well as the BJP. While in opposition the BJP advocated and admonished the government in power not to sell the interest of the country to imperial powers. It even accused the ruling powers of being in connivance with the foreign powers and charged of planning to re-impose colonial rule once again on India. But now in power the very BJP has maintained a studied silence on many burning issues of the globalization processes and their evil effects on the one hand. On the other hand it has steadily allowed privatization to take hold of many of the basic units of Indian economy. It is selling out the Airports, power sectors etc to the foreign investors. The whole drama that is unfolding between the BJP and the RSS has to be closely observed to identify the real objectives of the Sangh Parivar.

During the first few months of the year 2000, the *Swadeshi Jagran Manch* (SJM) has been accusing the BJP government's economic policies. The government on the other hand instead of refuting these charges would appeal to the united objectives of the Sangh Parivar. Then clarifications would be offered and truce is established for some time. But once again the process begins between the two components and at times the RSS also used to join the debate. But the in the ultimate analysis the forces of liberalization are let loose on the already weakened economy. Recently, the *Swadeshi*, the mouthpiece of SJM termed the policies of the BJP government as anti-national. But when the Prime Minister's office expressed its displeasure, the editor of Swadeshi apologized for it. On the other hand, the spokesperson of BJP stated, 'We regret the language but not the content'. This is a clear indication of real objective of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar. The BJP disapproves criticism by the SJM but does not regret for driving the country into neo-colonialism.

Moreover, the close network that exists between the Sangh and BJP can not be denied though the different front organisations deny any link with Sangh Parivar. For instance, the office of the party organ of SJM '*Swadeshi*' was in Tourism minister Ananth Kumar's house, 30 Prithviraj Road, New Delhi till recently. Since, hue and cry was raised in the parliament about allotting government building for party purpose, the office has been shifted to another BJP MP's house in 174 North Avenue.[23] This once again shows that there is a close bond between the Sangh and the BJP.

It is not only the reciprocal relationship that is built in over the years but the different faces of the Sangh Parivar that should be the focus of examination. The central government's intention to introduce a legislation to scrap the Land Ceiling Act has been publicly criticized by the Swadeshi Jagran Manch. The SJM spilled the beans by declaring in the open that 'In the name of land consolidation, the government is inviting foreign players -- not only companies but people who are not from villages –against the socio-cultural setting of rural Indian life'.[24] But as the report goes it is not the love for the agricultural community that has motivated the SJM to take to confrontational course but the electoral consequence after scraping the land ceiling act. It is not that the BJP is not aware of the political fall out of such a move but in the given context it has to surrender in front of the global market forces. The BJP is also sure of roping in the various constituents of Sangh Parivar to elicit electoral support from the agricultural community of India.

The saffron brigade is working over time to elicit support as well as collect donations from foreign countries in a special way form the Non-Resident Indians (NRI). The Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) claims that it has given over $2.5 million for *seva* charitable works in its 20 year of history. According to its members it is a national organization of Hindus in the U.S. enjoying global contacts. Parishad enjoys contacts with many sister organizations.[25] Hence, it is not surprising that the VHPA is able to collect such a huge amount of money. In today's exchange rate, this amount would measure upto Rupees 115 crores. Significantly, the 2000-2001 budgetary allocation for Laour and Employment of Indian government is only Rs 123.00 crores.[26] It is supposed to be operating in 16 states of India. There are some positive aspects of the *seva* or welfare activities that are undertaken by the VHP and the Sangh Parivar. During man-made and natural calamities the various fronts of the Sangh Parivar engage themselves in relief work. But as reported in many national dailies these welfare measures appear to a camouflage for the hidden agenda of temple construction and through that ensuring its political and socio-economic power.

Another area that calls for scrutiny is the Prime Minister's visit to the United States and his meetings with the NRIs in which a vast number of *sadhus*, *sants* and VHP activists were present. This raised an eyebrow among the journalists. While at home one crisis is overtaking another, in America the Prime Minister presented the picture of a middling, hesitant, regional giant to a global power of consequence. He asserted, 'Without doubt, there is now a repositioning of India in global and regional affairs'.[27] But it is not India but the non-Resident Indians who are reaping the fruits of the 'globalization' process. The PM himself made it clear in his poetic mood. He declared, '*jo mazdoor ban kar aaye the, whe ab shasak ban rahe hain*' (Those who came as labourers are now legislators). It is significant to note that the NRIs who met with the Prime Minister are not from the Dalit and the downtrodden communities but from the upper caste, upper class social groups. These are the people who have made the best out of both the worlds. They got excellent but very cheap education in terms of cost and have settled in America and are reaping the fruits of the education that was provided to them by the sweat and toil of common masses of India.

An additional exchange that took place between the Indian American community with a strong presence of VHP *sadhus* and *sants* and the Prime Minister once again showed the real agenda of the Sangh Parivar. To a pointed question about the construction of temple at Ayodhya the PM made his agenda open. He declared that the Indian voters have not given two-third majority to enable the BJP to engage in this exercise.[28] Here the class character as well as the class of both the PM as well as the Indian American community become crystal clear. Neither the PM nor the NRIs were worried about the millions of children who are illiterate because their parents can not afford to send them to school due to their oppressive economic conditions. Many others even if they want to educate their children, they can not do it since there is no educational facilities in the surrounding. While the exchange in America was on the lines of high-tech, temple construction etc, poor and exploited people were being massacred in some parts of India.

Thus, the life issues of the common masses did not figure in the dinner diplomacy of the Indians in America. Instead of talking about safe drinking water, education for the masses, basic health facilities for the villages, the PM spoke of his dream of making many Bangalores bloom in India.[29] These facts once again reiterate the brahminical world view. At every situation the brahminical social order wants to remain at the top of the social order and also enjoy the fruits of labour of others. Similarly, it always projects the 'other' as the real enemy who is the hurdle on its path for development. In the ultimate analysis, the Sangh Parivar that claims to uphold the past glory and greatness of India has betrayed the aspirations of the rural masses. It is a moot question if India can be saved while its villages are doomed to decay, decline and decadence.

Significantly, the VHP is making all out attempt to obtain NGO status in the United Nations. It has been regularly making applications for UN recognition. This is a systematic bid to enhance its image as a social work organization, so that under this cover it can carry out its other activities. This proposal of the VHP has run into trouble since many of the other organizations and associations have declared that the VHP is a fundamentalist, militant group and it participates in political activities.[30] The NGO status would provide two avenues to the Sangh Parivar. On the one hand, it can collect money from the foreign countries and voluntary agencies like any other social sector organization. On the other hand, it would also provide it a 'respectable space' among countries and agencies. This is an important move by the VHP since in the present it is considered as a communal organization.

Concluding Remarks

The process of globalization and saffronization of India go hand in hand and hence they need to be taken together. Every government that took over after the introduction of liberalization process made it a point to announce that all the previous contracts will be respected. One group of analyst argues that the Hindutva ideology and the liberalization process have direct link with the decaying of the Nehruvian ideology –secularism in society and socialism in economy. There are others who think that BJP's adherence to neo-liberal policies is part of the global transformation and the Sangh Parivar in policy is not averse to this phenomenon.

The President of India Mr. K.R. Narayanan in his address to the nation on the eve of fiftythird anniversary of Independence Day cautioned against the blind globalization and called the entire nation and the ruling NDA coalition to focus on the real issues. 'In spite of this impressive catalogue of achievements, we are still plagued by poverty, ignorance, disease and superstition. Our policies, programmes, five-year plans and other development efforts as reflected in our economic liberalization, have not been adequate enough to ensure basic needs to our vast millions even after more than five decades of Independence'.[31] The BJP government which glorifies in the Kargil war has not been able to provide the minimum needs of the toiling masses of our country. It is one thing to shout slogans about nationalism from the rooftop and another thing to address to the basic needs of the common masses.

Not only in terms of its failures but also with regard to its policies one need to critically look at the progress and the performance of the saffron brigade. As stated above, the Sangh continues with its double talk. On the one hand, Hindu nationalist ideologues criticize 'western philosophy' for producing inhuman, disharmonious societies. On the other hand, RSS publications are full of references to modern science and utterances of more or less famous western scientists, historians, and politicians, who either praise India or criticize certain features of western society.[32] Going further, it would be interesting to gather data about the offsprings of the Sangh leaders who are getting educated and trained abroad.

The brahminical force is confronted with the ideology to propagate Hindu nationalism on the one hand and on the other to follow the economic path the developed countries have taken. It is reported that in 1995, the RSS sarsanghchalak Rajendra Singh went on a trip to the West and returned disillusioned with the stagnation in India, lamenting the 'lack of culture' and the rampant corruption: "Why is this country lagging behind, this India which was once hailed as Golden Bird before foreign invaders discovered her? Beggars, that is what we have been reduced to, because we are going with the begging bowls before the affluent nations and multinationals".[33]

The need of the hour is to look for alternatives. The *Raithara Sangha* of Karnataka has helped the small farmers to implement changes at the farm level and modernize agriculture without falling into the clutches of the loan sharks. Farmers in Tumkur of Karnataka have cut down ***neem*** trees once they realized the fact these will be taken over by the TNCs. Opposing liberalism is not opposing the efficient use of resources available to society, nor does it mean restricting individual freedom, nor does it mean supporting state socialism. Opposing neoliberalism is to affirm the fact that there are no absolute institutions to explain or direct human history and that men and women can not be reduced to market.

Another important alternative that calls for our attention is: Close and serious attention should be paid to the nexus that is developing between the imperialist forces and the right wing hindutva forces. Both are equally dangerous for the unity, economic independence and sovereignty of the nation. In this situation, developing the anti-imperialist and anti-communal consciousness of the common masses is the need of the hour. Revitalising the popular participation through the local bodies or self-governance is one of the ways of opposing both globalization and Hindutva force. Resurrecting the civil society and making it challenge the state that has abdicated its responsibilities is another need of the hour.

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In the 1980s, the Shiv Sainiks' battle with the established unions continued as part of its attempt to replace their dominance. In the early months of 1981 leaders of the Congress-affiliated RMMS complained bitterly about the Shiv Sena's arm tactics and accused Chief Minister Antulay of covertly supporting the Shiv Sena.

Times of India, April 19, 1981

Chapter V

Hindutva force and Political Participation

The interface between the communally based Hindutva force and their political participation also offers fertile ground for sociological investigation. In the Indian context on the one hand, a minority of metropolitan elite argued vehemently for secularism in its various shades. On the other hand, another group of communally minded persons had been constantly demanding for politicising the religious sphere. Rather they have constantly endeavoured to engage in political manipulation based on religious sentiments.

Partha Ghosh makes this point very clear. Religion and politics are always interconnected. The phenomenon is more evident in developing societies where political units are generally not individual citizens as is the case in industrial societies but they are social groups and identities. Recent developments in India marked by the unprecedented rise in religio-centric politics underscore the point. The process is epitomized by the rise of Hindu-chauvinistic BJP to the centre-stage and its subsequent formation of a coalition government at the centre with itself as the dominant partner.[1]

The phenomenal rise of the Hindutva force in the political arena of Indian subcontinent needs a historical analysis. The rise of Hindu nationalism especially the communal nationalism from the 1920 onwards provides a holistic backdrop for the comprehensive understanding of political assertion and political mobilization of the Indian masses on the communal line. In a special way the crisis created by the communal politics by both the Hindu and Muslim leadership provided fertile soil for the emergence and enforcement of sectarian politics. Further, the *divide-et–empera* policy adopted by the colonial rulers had pervasive and cumulative impact on the future politics of India. The Hindu-Muslim divide offered special ground for the colonial rulers to play politics in the subcontinent and finally led to the partition of India.

The genesis and the continuation of the Bharatiya Janata Party [Indian People's Party] should be located in its former *avatar*. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh [Indian People's Union] was the first political formation of the Sangh Parivar. It was born in 1951 and it was an outcome of the post-independence communal strife. The founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) Dr. Shyam Prasad Mookerjee stressed the fact that the refugee factor was one of the most important compulsions behind launching this new party. It was also to challenge the pseudo secular ideology of the Congress. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee emphasized the fact that the migration of Hindu refugees from Pakistan compelled the founders of BJS to launch this new party. It is estimated that over 1 crore people migrated to India from Pakistan in the first two decades after independence. Most of them settled in Assam, Tripura and West Bengal. Even today there are regular conflicts between those who migrated during the partition and those who are original settlers in these states. Almost all the political parties capitalize on this crisis. But the most important fact is that BJS took its roots in the refugee settlements and especially in Delhi resettlement colonies.

Two issues provided enough ammunition to the communal political party, the BJS to secure a space for itself in the crisis torn Indian political arena. In December 1978, O.P.Tyagi, a member of the BJS introduced in the Lok Sabha a private member bill which proposed to make criminal offence to use "force, fraud or inducement" to convert. This issue of conversion set in motion a whole process of minority complex, breach of trust between the Hindus and Christians and laid the foundation for communal politics. Till the demolition of Babri Masjid, and just after this the politico-religious communal frenzy of the Sangh Parivar culminated in innumerable riots and destructions. But from the onslaught on the Muslim minorities now the Sangh Parivar has turned its attention towards the Christian minorities. Since, 1998 the attack on the Christian minorities has increased in volume and dimension.

This move of the saffron brigade can be explained by the news item that appeared recently in one of the leading dailies of the country. 'Even as the National Human Rights Commission has sought a report from the Uttar Pradesh Government about the provocative utterances of Bajrang Dal activists against the minorities and Attorney General Mr. Soli Sorabjee has sharply criticised such inflammatory comments, there have been reports about the same Organisation imparting arms training to its members in a camp near Ayodhya'.

More objectionable than the training itself is the purpose of Bajrang Dal as expounded by its national convenor. According to him, it is meant to counter the "growing activities of ISI agents and anti-social elements in the country". The chief of the VHP in UP has been more forthcoming. His explanation is that the training is directed against "anti-Hindu forces". For a start, it is not surprising that such patently illegal acts are taking place in UP. It is a state whose Chief Minister does not inspire confidence about his abilities even in his own party, with the result that it is forever looking for his successor. Recent reports suggest that UP has the worst record of human right's violations in the country. However, the Bajrang Dal's pronouncements are in a different category. An arms training programme underlines the dangerous possibility of the diatribes degenerating into open violence.

The news item goes on to add that, 'As it is, there has been a spate of attacks against individual Christians and also against their churches and graveyards. The latest remarks of the activists of the two Sangh parivar outfits are bound to deepen the sense of insecurity among them and among the Muslims. It goes without saying that it is not for any organisation to fight anti-social elements. That is the Government's task. If private vigilante groups usurp this official duty, it will be a recipe for disaster since various dubious outfits, themselves made up of criminal elements, will begin to fight each other. If the Sangh parivar groups have been bold enough to announce their plans, it is evidently because the Centre's response to the threat faced by the Christians and other minorities has left much to be desired. But as the NHRC's move shows, people in important positions are at last beginning to take positions as adopted by the Bajrang Dal and other groups. It is time that the Government unambiguously clarified that it will not allow such openly provocative remarks and actions.[2]

It is also imperative that any serious attempt to understand these forms of communal outburst be located in its historical background. Savarkar's own objective in the formulation of Hindutva force is to Hinduise all politics and militarise Hindudom. Hedgewar when he established the RSS had this explicit aim to organize the Hindus on nationalistic lines. Golwalkar went one step further and declared in his book *The Bunch of Thoughts* that 'Muslims, Christians and Communists are India's internal enemies'. The BJS itself was established with the stated objective to take care of the Hindu refugees. These kinds of exclusivity ultimately leads to deterioration of the basic sense of pluralistic culture, belief systems, ways of living etc, that is inherent in a pluralistic society.

It is not just the present politicization of communal sentiments that will provide answer to our queries. But the electoral politics of Jana Sangh also need some comments here. In the late 1950s, the BJS thought that politics in Independent India is developing into two opposing forces, one representing nationalism and democracy, centered on the Jana Sangh, and the other, representing totalitarian socialism, based on the Communist Party of India. It also believed that the Congress would be swept aside by these two forces. Based on this type of belief, K.R. Malkani, the editor of the Organiser wrote, "I am of the definite opinion that the remedy for our current ills lies in Hindutva and that Communism can be combated and conquered in Hindusthan by the Hindus through Hindutva. If we do not fortify the Hindu foundations of Bharat we stand in danger of losing one part after another even as we have already lost Sind, Frontier, one-third Kashmir, one-half Punjab and two-third Bengal. The new party – if it is to **serve and save the Nation** – must be Hindu in purpose, plan and policy".[3]

From the above statements, two interrelated facts need to be highlighted. Right form the beginning of its inception, the BJS was aware of its place and role in the Indian political arena. It saw itself as the champion of Hindu nationalism and continued to pursue this path, till today. Moreover, the Jana Sangh's reading of the decline of the Congress is true today than as expected in the early 1960s. It is the very policy and politics of convenience of the Congress that led to the downfall of the Congress and paved the way for the right wing Hindu organizations and party.

In April 1980 the BJS was renamed as the *Bharatiya Janata Party*. The change of name was to indicate the political reorientation of the party. The word "Sangh" being common to both the BJS and the RSS, it was considered as a liability, although the members were permitted to have connection with the RSS. The major political platform the BJS took up was to make Hindi as the national language and to ban cow slaughter all over India. But in reality it is the issue of ban on cow slaughter that provided the Sangh Parivar unlimited ammunitions to set in motion communal frenzy, communal conflicts and communal riots.

At different times the RSS leaders have denounced that there is any direct relationship between them and the BJS/BJP. But a careful reading into the history of Sangh Parivar refutes these public pronouncements. Mauli Chandra Sharma who was President of BJS, (he later joined the Congress party) is reported to have stated in a BJS meeting that he left the Jana Sangh for two reasons. 'The first was that contrary to the high ideals with which the party was started, communal feeling was gradually introduced into it by the RSS. Secondly, like the Nazis in Germany the RSS was gradually working its way into the political arena through the Jana Sangh'.[4]

The change in nomenclature is indicative not only of the name but it also indicates the change in terms of policies and methodology of political mobilization the Sangh Parivar adopted in course of time. In the First National Convention held in December 1980, Vajpayee called for a three-pronged programme of ***Sangathan, Sangharsh aur Sanrachna*** that is, organisation, struggle and reconstruction. Thus the BJP opted for organizational mobilization, struggle to attain political power and constructive work. These are well thought out schemes of the BJP which in course of time opened up new avenues for political mobilization. As and when necessary it took to political mobilization but by raising religious sentiments and at times communal sentiments.

Partha Ghosh divides the 18 years of BJP's history [1980-1998] into 3 parts. 1) Under the leadership of Vajpayee it projected itself as a liberal force drawing its inspiration form the Gandhian socialism. But it did not politically pay off. On the social level a new form of Hindu Militancy was gaining ground. In November 1983, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organized an *Ekatmata Yagna*. The slogan was **"India can not be kept united without uniting the Hindus"**. 2) Advani took over the leadership in 1986. By criticising the pseudo-secularism and minorityism he worked on the Hindu resurgence. In his first address he said, **"Ours is the nation-first party"**. In 1990 the V.P. Singh's government decided to implement the decade old Mandal Commission Report, providing reservation to the backward castes. But the BJP saw the threat posed by this since this will vertically divide the Hindu community into the forward and backward castes, and it would lose the hard earned Hindu-vote bank. Hence, in August 1990, Advani decided to launch his *Rath-Yatra*. In the entire rath yatra process and in the anti-social events that occurred during and after the yatra, the Bajrang Dal which was constituted by the RSS as the militant youth brigade in 1984 was in the forefront. 3) The third phase was under the combined leadership of both Vajpayee and Advani.[5] It is appropriate to add, the fourth phase was started from leading the BJP to the helm of political power.

Oliver Heath in his observant reading of the 'Anatomy of BJP's Rise to Power' exposes the three levels of BJP's expansion in the 1990s. The expansion was social, regional and political in nature. First level: it is well known that the original support base has been concentrated among the upper castes. Especially in the Hindi belt, which is the homeland of the Sangh Parivar, it is comprised of 4 Bs, that is, the Brahmins, the Banias, the Babu Sahebs – the Rajputs and the Bhumihars. In this region, Ayodhaya as the 'Hindu vote bank' worked wonders in favour of the BJP. It has been the weakest among the Muslim and Christian minorities and the lower caste groups. Heath goes on to argue his points based on the electoral performance of BJP. Second level: in most of the states of Hindi heartland as well as in some of the other states the OBCs constitute the new social base of the BJP. Third level: in most of the states the BJP has made giant strides in garnering support among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Muslims. This is more due to the support for the allies than the BJP itself. But ultimately it has benefited the BJP more than the alliance partners.

Table 5.1 : BJP Support by Community [%]

S.No.	Categories	Population*	1991	1996	1998
1.	Upper castes	12.10	52	48	42
2.	OBC	52.00	34	35	38
3.	SC	15.05	8	10	11
4.	ST	7.51	5	6	7
5.	Muslims	11.18	1	2	2

[Source: * taken from Census Report 1991
Rest from Oliver Heath, EPW, 1999.][6]

In sum it can be stated that due to the presence of its political allies the BJP has been able to gain a foothold in a new territory. It is due to the interface between social, regional and political expansions the BJP has emerged as the largest political party and with the support of the strange bedfellows, the allies, it has been able to form government at the centre and in Uttar Pradesh. What direction it would take in the future is not clear from the available data. Also, in the absence of political allies what would have been the voting behaviour of the supporters of BJP as well as the supporters of the allies, these questions also need to be answered. But one aspect is clear. And that is, its original vote bank comprising the upper castes is intact and it has been able to rope in some more from the lower castes and the Muslim minority.

Attempts to Woo the Dalits

The problem before the BJP was how to translate Hindu bhakts into vote banks. In the early phase, the BJP without appearing to woo the Dalits slowly adapted itself to shed its upper caste image. In the second phase without losing sight of its policy the BJP wooed the Dalits too. Govindacharya, one of the shrewdest politicians among the BJP leadership noted that 'the rise of dalit power will eventually emerge with the larger entity of Hindutva for the well-being of the whole society'. He had also admonished the BJP cadres to put it across to the masses that the Hindutva does not mean a brahminical order.

The statements of Govindacharya once again highlight the double talk of the Sangh Parivar. He keeps insisting that 'the caste system was rotten and outdated and it could not be validated by any religious leader or text. He emphasized that the life of an Indian citizen is to be governed by the Indian constitution and not by Manusmriti or any other religious texts'. This is a revolutionary utterance in itself. But the real intention of Sangh Parivar is revealed by Govindacharya's another statement. According to him, 'power to the dalits, should not mean victimization of the former oppressors'. The shift in policy also was communicated in public slogans. At its national executive meeting held in March 1994 at Hyderabad the BJP urged the government to take steps to nullify the November 1992 Supreme Court judgement which stated that reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes pertained only to their recruitment and not to promotions. Seemingly the move was to upstage Kanshi Ram who had declared that he would not demand reservation.[7]

Further, one notices that Vajpayee while addressing the BJP workers in July 1995 had urged the party members "to attract women, dalits, tribals, people below the poverty line, the unemployed and all those who for 5 decades have been left behind by the system'. To show its solidarity with the Dalits, on 25th September 1995, the BJP organized a Dalit Convention in the industrial city, Kanpur. The convention was to mark the culmination of BJP's statewide month long grassroot level Dalit mobilization campaign aimed at politically enchasing the support of the community for the Mayawati government and thereby obliterating the upper caste image of the BJP. But this ultimately ensured support for the BJP. In Bihar too the BJP propped up a young and energetic Dalit leader, Sanjay Paswan and organized a Dalit convention just before the 13th Lok Sabha elections. This proved extremely beneficial to Sanjay Paswan because he won with a thumping majority from Nawada reserved constituency. By building up Sanjay Paswan the BJP has managed to build its own leader among the Paswans of Bihar, though it managed to get much of Paswan caste votes by aligning with Ram Vilas Paswan.[8]

The present attempt by the BJP to woo the Dalits has surpassed all its past records. It has 'appointed' Bangaru Lakshman, an MP from Andhra Pradesh as the party president. Bangaru Lakshman who is supposed to be from the rank and file of BJP was a Minister of State for Railways in Vajpayee's Government.[9] From the time of its birth, the BJS and the BJP did not have any one from the South as the President of the party. There was only one exception for a short period. A. Rama Rao, a Telegu Brahmin was made the President of the Jana Sangh in 1960s for a year. Now by appointing Lakshman, the BJP has sent strong signals to two sectors of the vote bank. It has wooed the South Indian voters. Since the Sangh Parivar is seen more as the creation of the Hindi belt it has become imperative that Sangh Parivar project itself as an all-Indian organization. By this move the Sangh has also caught the imagination of the Dalits. Another South Indian Brahmin, Jana Krishnamurti was the front runner for the post. But by appointing Lakshman, the BJP has made inroads into the two above mentioned interconnected segments.

Another serious issue that needs focus here is that Bangaru Laxman himself has reiterated the fact that RSS and the Sangh Parivar both are controlled by brahminical groups. When questioned about the fact that coming from a Dalit community how could he align with the brahminical forces, Bangaru Laxman is reported to have argued that every party in India whether of the right or of the left is controlled by leaders from the upper castes, especially the Brahmins. He went further and accused the BSP and RPI for having used the Dalits as vote-banks. Pointing to the fate of the Dalit Panthers who championed the cause of the Dalits but later aligned with the Congress, Laxman claimed that the BSP and the RPI would end up being the appendix of other parties.[10] Hence, according to him it is just as well that a Dalit has become the leader of a brahminincal political party.

Bangaru Laxman in the same vein claimed that it is the Congress party which has used the Dalits as vote bank but never allowed any Dalit to be the leader of the party. He applauded the BJP for making Mayawati the first Dalit and women Chief Minister of Bihar. This clearly indicates two social realities. Every political party, irrespective of their ideological leaning has used the Dalits and the marginalized communities as vote banks. Secondly, compared to other parties, the BJP has projected that it treats the Dalits on equal terms. This is the point of attraction for the Dalit leaders. Often times, it is the leaders from the Dalit communities who support the political parties. The voters on the other hand vote either for the party or more for the individual or the leader.

Minority Muslims and the BJP

With its involvement in the demolition of Babri Masjid, the BJP did not dare to woo the Muslim voters. Yet in 1993 elections it sent feelers to the community by distancing itself from the belligerent VHP. But its political manipulations did not yield results. Hence, it undertook various activities. For example, BJP leader Madan Lal Khurana when he was Chief Minister of Delhi ceremoniously named an important street as Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Marg. By invoking the name of one of the towering figures of freedom fighters from the Muslim community, the BJP tried to win Muslim votes. As the eleventh Lok Sabha elections neared, the BJP created a minority cell and the cell prepared a comprehensive package offering *taaleem* (education), *tanzeem* (organization) and *tijarat* (employment) to the Muslims as part of the campaign for the 1996 elections.

Arif Beg who was made the leader of this cell declared that, 'after this the BBC will not refer to us the Hindu right-wing BJP but a truly a secular party'. But writing about the real intent of BJP Parwez Hafeez argued that, 'the Three Ts programmes of the BJP is a very ambitious project involving huge funds and manpower. The party has targeted the working class Muslims like the carpetweavers of Mirzapur, locksmiths of Aligarh, zari-makers of Varanasi, banglemakers of Ferozabad and so on for showering its largesse. Interestingly, the BJP had accused the Congress of appeasement of the Muslims".[11] Here it is essential to mention that the Congress party realising the fact that its traditional vote bank is sinking appealed through Ghulam Nabi Azad and apologised to the community for his party's failure to protect the Babri Masjid.

We may give a brief look at the Muslim question and explore and explode the myth of Muslim population explosion. The Table presented below gives a true picture. Also one realizes that the female-male ratio is the lowest among the Hindu community. But this is not to suggest that it is the same with the entire caste-class group within the Hindu society. But this is true of those communities who have taken to various means of population control.

Table 5.2 : Religion-wise Breakup of Indian Population

Religion	Population %	Female/Male
Hindus	82.00	925
Muslims	12.12	930
Christians	2.34	994
Sikhs	1.94	888
Buddhists	0.76	952
Jains	0.40	946

[Source: Census Report 1991.
This excludes Jammu and Kashmir data]

Equally important is to look into the statement that the Muslims vote en masse to any political party. Exploding the myth of the so-called monolithic Muslim vote Imtiaz Ahmad argues, 'there would be a highly clustered pattern of voting with the Muslim vote splitting evenly among the different political formations, from the Congress to the BSP besides the SP and JD/RJD. Muslim vote will split along caste-class lines with the elite Muslims reverting substantially to the Congress and upwardly mobile backward Muslim groups voting in tandem with similar groups for the political parties raising the slogan of social justice'.[12]

Here it is important to expose the double dealings of the BJP. In the 1996 elections the party proposed 5 electoral planks. *Suchita* (cleanliness in public life), *suraksha* (national security), *swadeshi* (economic nationalism), *samrasta* (social equality) and *sanskritic rashtiryavad* (cultural nationalism). But behind all these lay the 3 dominant agenda: 1. Temple reconstruction, 2. Uniform civil code, 3. Article 370. Further, though the BJP came out with many schemes for the welfare of the Muslim community, it had nothing substantive to offer to the minority Muslims. In Maharashtra the Shiva Sena-BJP government had abolished the Minorities Commission, reduced grants to Urdu institutions, adopted the Uniform Civil Code, renamed several public places and abolished the Srikrishna Commission inquiring into the anti-Muslim Bombay riots of 1993.[13]

Once again the BJP made strategic changes in their rhetoric and actions. Broadly, the BJP and its allies decided to focus their campaign for the 1996 elections on the following issues:

- Total ban on cow slaughter : the Bajrang Dal planned to launch a massive, aggressive movement from 14 January to forcibly stop cow and bull slaughter in the country.
- Uniform civil code : under the constitution, the states can not introduce a common civil code. But the BJP/Shiv sena government will try to make political capital by pushing bills on the subject.
- Muslim population: During the past 40 years, the percentage of Muslims in the total population has risen from 9.93 to 11.67. the Sangh Parivar will play on the anxiety that Hindus may eventually be reduced to a minority.
- The temple trio: the BJP will not take up the Kashi, Mathura and Ayodhya issues directly. But the VHP will. The only problem is that the Sangh Parivar is not sure whether the strategy will work this time.
- Infiltration of foreign nationals: between 1981 and 1991, the Muslim population has increased by nearly 40 % in the border states of Rajasthan, Tripura, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Demand for scrapping the minority commission: the BJP/Shiv Sena feel that it is another example of appeasing the minorities.

The above stated facts about BJP's electoral manipulations were clearly expressed in its manifesto, '*For a Strong and Prosperous India: Election Manifesto 1996*'. "Hindutva or cultural nationalism, shall be the rainbow which will bridge our present to our glorious past and pave the way for an equally glorious future; it will guide the transition from *swarajya*/self-rule to *surajaya*/good-governance. Hindutva is a unifying principle, which alone can preserve the unity and integrity of our nation. It is a collective endeavour to protect and re-energize the soul of India, to take us into the next millennium as a strong and prosperous nation.[14]

As stated above the BJP changed its strategy keeping in mind electoral advantages and the voters. Hence it argued that 'the Hindutva was and is the basis of the party's ideology but it also decided not to talk about it any more. Our votes on Hindutva have been consolidated in our favour and now we must expand our vote bank. Hence, it began to shed its untouchability image. The Hindutva rhetoric was relegated to the background. It tried to woo the Muslims with the slogan, "We consider the Muslims as the flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood".

But the track record of the communal political party disproves the claims of the BJP. During the 700 years of Muslim rule, even under the worst Muslim rulers there was no communal riot. The first riot is reported to have taken place in 1730 in Ahmedabad, over the incident of lighting the *holi* fire by a Hindu. This was opposed by his Muslim neighbour. When the Hindu did not listen the Muslim neighbour slaughtered a cow and it led to riot. Instead of blaming one or the other it is necessary to look into the root causes of riot.

Also it is necessary to dispel some of the myths as expounded by the Sangh Parivar in general and the BJP in particular. The national sample survey 1988 demonstrates: 1. A total of 52.3% Muslims are below poverty line, 2. The monthly income of Muslims is only Rs. 150/-; 3. 50.5% Muslims are illiterate, 4. Muslims educated upto high school are 4%; 5. Their share in government service is 4.4%; etc. One powerful tool employed by the BJP leadership is that the Muslim population is increasing in leaps and bounds. It is a fact that many of the Muslims do not see the utility of family planning programmes. It also true that the Muslim's attitude to family planning is influenced by *Ulema* who see family planning as a western plot and moral malaise that lead to break down of family values. But one cannot generalize from the above statements. Yet often, Muslims en masse are blamed of being communal in nature. The myth that the Muslims are the real 'enemy' of India also adds to breach of trust between the two communities. But on the other hand, in many of the riots the police bullets hit only the Muslims and not the Hindus.

At this juncture let us briefly look at the attacks on the Muslim minority. In a rally held at the Ram Lila Ground, Muslim leaders urged the President not to give his consent to the controversial 'Religious Places Bill' passed by the Uttar Pradesh Assembly. The leaders described the Bill as 'anti-Muslim' and demanded that the UP government be dismissed since it failed to maintain the secular tradition of the state'.[15] In BJP ruled Uttar Pradesh, all the members of the ruling party voted in favour of the Bill because the BJP and alliance partners wanted to ensure the total Hindu votes for them. On the other hand, the opposition parties voted against it so as to project to the Muslim community that they are defenders of the rights of the minority. Though there might have been individuals who differed from these two perceptions, yet predominantly this was the stand taken by the parties.

It is also reported that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's slogan, "One village, one shakha" is aimed at saffronising the entire Gujarat state by 2005. The new *mantra* for the RSS expansion will be explained at a three-day *Sankalp Shibir* (pledge camp) to be held at Kathwada in Ahamadabad district. The organizers are expecting about 27,000 swayamsevaks to attend the camp. This has led to communal tension in the state.[16]

The above events are representative in nature of the Sangh Parivar's bid to create panic and fear among the minorities and to mastermind communal riots and achieve its objectives. But it also regularly comes out with public pronouncements like, "Protection of Minorities our obligation". Amid sharp and widespread condemnation of the continuing attacks of Christians in different parts of the country, the Government in the Lok Sabha today owned up its "constitutional obligation" to protect minorities. The parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan stated that, "We attach top priority to protecting the minorities wherever they are, whether they are Hindus in Jammu Kashmir or Muslims and Christians elsewhere".[17]

The BJP leadership did not limit their public pronouncements by only vowing to protect the minority Muslims but they also went one step ahead and tried to woo the Muslim voters. Bangaru Laxman, the new President of the party opened up the agenda of ensuring the Muslim vote for BJP. But he was not speaking his mind, but that of the Prime Minister. Since Atal Bihari Vajpayee knows that without the votes of the Muslim community, the BJP will never be able to come to power in the centre on its own merit. The party is also aware of the fact that the Naqvis, Bhakts and Shahnawazs can not fetch Muslim votes for it. Hence, the attempt is to woo the entire community.[18]

Mushirul Hasan replying to the overtures made by the BJP towards the Muslims argues that if Laxman has a special fondness for the Muslims and desires their 'expedient relationship' with his party, he will have to redress their grievances. Mushirul maintains that it is not the self-appointed leaders of the Muslim community but the Muslim peasants, mine workers and the fishermen would ultimately decide about their electoral choice as well as what should be done for their community. He goes on to expose the mass contact programme of the Congress party. Mushirul is of the opinion that this campaign fizzled out not because of nationwide opposition from the Muslims, but because it was devoid of any economic content and that it offered too little, too late.[19] Once again it becomes clear that the common masses whichever caste, religion and region they may belong to, it is they who will determine the direction and the destination the country should take. Anyone who is concerned about the past, present and the future as well as about the very survival of our country should be busy with the issues of the common toiling masses.

Here one needs to pose for a while and review the pattern of behaviour of the Muslim community in general and their leaders in particular. During the 5 decades of democratic experience in India the Muslim leadership has followed several strategies to safeguar the interests of the community. 1. By joining one of the parties sympathetic to minorities or secular in orientation, 2. By working thorough a non-partisan pressure groups that would ensure the election of sympathetic individuals regardless of party affiliation, 3. By forming their own political party and by trying to extract benefits by holding the balance of power. Yet at times, there is some duality within the minds of the Muslims. This statement reveals the fact, "The trouble with us is that wherever we are in a majority we want theocracy and wherever we are in a minority we want secularism".

The Sangh Parivars' pursuance of communal nationalism in turn leads to the minority communalism of the Muslims. With the breach of peace, more and more distrust sets in and this finally leads to communal politics. Below presented [Table 5.3] is a rough classification of the communal organizations built into Hindu society and the Muslim society. This is not a clear cut classification and grouping of the reality. But it is representative in nature.

Table 5.3 : Communal Forces among Hindus and Muslims[20]

Hindu Communal Forces	Year	Muslim Communal Forces	Year
Hindu Mahasab	1922	Muslim League	1905
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh	1925	Jamaiyat Islami	1940
Akhil Bharati Vidyarti Parishad	1948	Student Islami Organization	
Banaras Hindu Vishwavidyalaya	1915	Aligarh Muslim University	1898
Dharm Sansad	1984	Millie Parliament	
Shiv Sena	1966	Insaf Party	
Bajrang Dal	1984	Adam Sena	
Sant Sadhu Samaj (Hindu sants and sadhus)		Jamiyat –e-Ulma-"e-" Hind (Muslim Theologians)	
Ram Janmabhumi Samiti	1984	Babri Masjid Action Committee	1986

[Source: Prepared by Prakash Louis from various materials]

Asghar Ali Engineer in his analysis of the emergence of communal conflicts exposes the evolution of competitive communal process after 1950. He argues that the Muslim community tired of Congress rule and enthused by the renouncing of communal politics by the Jana Sangh in the 1977 voted massively for the Janata Party. It is at this juncture the prayer-leader of the Jama Masjid, Delhi, popularly known as the Shahi Imam, emerged as a strong Muslim leader who lent his support to the Janata Party. Engineer is of the view that the emergence of the Shahi Imam was an unfortunate development for the Indian Muslims. He had neither participated in the freedom struggle nor had any worthwhile knowledge of intricacies of the Muslim problems, much less any experience of evolving proper strategies. When the Janata experiment failed, Shahi Imam too showed political opportunism and supported the Congress in the 1980 elections.[21]

Engineer cautions that competitive communalism is most dangerous for the country and for the minority community. Even if minority communalism is defensive, though it is not always, it provides legitimacy for majority communalism which in turn strengthens minority communalism thus creating a vicious circle which is difficult to break.[22] In most of the communal conflicts, the toiling masses are gravely affected in every way.

BJP and Coalition Politics

The 1998 Lok Sabha election was a watershed for the BJP in more than one sense. It projected Vajpayee as the 'Able Prime Minister and Stable government". Its fortune kept soaring higher. This was made possible by the tactical alliance the BJP forged with various shades of regional political parties spread out all over the country. The alliance with Ramakrishna Hegde's Lok Shakti provided the entry point for the BJP in the state of Karnataka. BJP and its allies won the election and formed ministry at the centre and Hegde was made cabinet minister with the commerce portfolio. But in the 1999 elections, Hegde joined the Janata Dal (U) formation that supported the BJP alliance. But he lost the elections and was left high and dry by the BJP combination.

In Andhra Pradesh the BJP formed alliance with the NTRTD party led by Lakshmi Parvati, the widow of N.T. Rama Rao who had little political support base in the state. But after the election, though the BJP was the single largest party and its alliance partners had a majority it was not able to form the government at the centre. Hence, it forged post-election alliance with the TDP by promising to make G.M.C. Balayogi the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and thus gained enough support to form the government. Thus, the wishes of Vajpayee for the last 40 years to become the Prime Minister of India was fulfilled. Here the support provided by partners who come from contradictory ideologies became crucial in the formation of the government.

Another crucial political determinant that needs to be highlighted is that in many states as well as in the centre, the alliance partners and BJP were successful in projecting themselves as a viable alternative to the sinking Congress. The Congress house which was divided on various issues continue to make itself and the common voters believe that there is no alternative to it. Hence, it could not spring any surprise. The BJP and its partners exploited this make-belief notion of the Congress. For example in Orissa the BJP forged an alliance with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) led by Biju's son Navin Patnaik. About the alliance Patnaik remarked, 'My party is wedded to the objective of fulfilling Biju Patnaik's dreams. The tactical alliance is transitory in nature. People are not bothered who you are or who you ally with. They are concerned with their problems. They know that the Congress is the cause of the lack of development in the state. BJD and BJP have come together so that the anti-Congress vote is not divided. The people see us as a viable alternative'.[23]

Orissa has been for years as if the family property of Patnaiks, either of Biju Patnaik or of Janaki Patnaik. As stated by Navin it is the dreams of these politicians that has been fulfilled and not that of the common masses of Orissa. As history wished, Navin himself has become the Chief Minister of Orissa riding on the BJD-BJP alliance. But his inability to speak in Oriyya has already alienated him from the common masses. Moreover, the main objective of BJD-BJP alliance is to cash on the declining fortunes of the Congress in the state. This too is perceived by a politically aware voters.

The alliance formed between BJP and Jayalalitha's AIADMK surprised every political pundit. Jayalalitha had become household name for her corruption and despotic behaviour. But BJP came to prominence with slogans like eradication of corruption. BJP leader

Sushma Swaraj had declared, 'There will be no dilution in the BJP's anti-corruption election plank' but at the same time underlined the political necessity of aligning with the AIADMK with her tongue-in-cheek saying that 'there can be no choice for untouchables' like the BJP'.[24]

Though the BJP formed alliance with 'strange bedfellows' yet it also concentrated in highlighting the local issues. Kushabhau Thakre, the BJP General Secretary stated, 'The people feel alienated. There is corruption, unemployment and lack of infrastructure. We are assuring them that their problems will be heard and taken care of. For that our political presence is required. Our concern for the northeast has started reflecting in our All India working committee meetings. A national party like the BJP taking up their cause has given a ray of hope to the people'.[25] Going further one need to comprehend this phenomenon that the BJP has been very successful in converting an issue into becoming a potent force for political mobilization. The BJP managed to make people believe that in the given political scenario of the country it is they alone who can deliver the goods. Thakre went on to say, 'I was really surprised by the welcome during one of my visits to Mizoram. I asked the people there, 'We are supposed to be Hindu party, why do you want us?' They told me BJP was the only party which was strongly opposing infiltration, and if it went on at the same rate, Mizoram would change from a Christian-dominated state to a Muslim-dominated state within next five years'.[26]

Thakre's statement has succeeded in establishing two interrelated political processes that the Sangh Parivar and the BJP is crying hoax about the northeast. On the one hand he has communicated this message that Mizoram is a Christian state and that Muslim infiltration is taking place unabated. It is this type of political propaganda that has enabled the BJP to become a mainline party and finally the ruling party from being an 'untouchables' a few years ago. This can be demonstrated from the election results of 1998 [Table 5.4].

Table 5.4 : General Elections to Lok Sabha 1998

Party/Alliance	Seats contested	Seats won	% of winning	Deposit lost	Vote %
BJP	384	180	46.88	56	26.0
BJP + Allies		249			37.4
Congress	474	141	29.75	152	26.4
Congress + Allies		147			27.1
Left	138	48	34.78	61	8.0
JD	190	6	3.16	155	3.3
BSP	249	5	2.00	174	4.8
UF		95			22.5
Independent	1900	6	0.32	1883	2.4

[Note: Based on 540 constituencies. BJP allies include only its pre-poll allies. Congress allies exclude RJD and SP.
Adapted from Partha Ghosh, p 141]

After the swearing in Vajpayee announced National Agenda for Governance [Appendix F]. It is one of the first policy statements of the Sangh Parivar in general and of BJP in particular. A critical analysis of the National Agenda would reveal the hidden agenda of the BJP. It categorically pledges that it would continue the reform process but with a *swadeshi* thrust. As argued in the previous chapter, the BJP vehemently opposed the liberalization process, the gradual control of economic reform by the World Bank and the IMF. While in power, it has surrendered to the dictates of external financial bodies. It is silent about implementing land reform policies. Even in the 1999 election manifesto, the BJP maintained silence about burning issues like land reform policies.[27] Interestingly, some of its partners have incorporated implementation of land reform measures as one of their agenda.

The 1999 Elections

National Democratic Alliance. An Agenda for a Proud, Prosperous India: Election Manifesto, Lok Sabha Elections, 1999.

Here we present some of the promises made by the BJP before the 1999 elections.

- The poverty alleviation programme must be improved and strengthened.
- The Public Distribution System should ensure food security for all. The PDS should be expanded bringing into its ambit 14 essential commodities. Prices of these commodities should be reduced by 50%.
- Land Reform should be implemented in right earnest. Cultivable lands should be distributed to landless agricultural labourers.
- The practices of the real estate business buying up agricultural lands, irrigation tanks, village common lands and converting them into residential flats should be banned.
- Halt the implementation of the present package of economic policies influenced by IMF-World Bank and characterised by an open door policy to transnational companies.
- The attempts at privatising the existing educational institutions for higher studies should be stopped.
- The government should take steps without delay to realise its goal of 'Health for all by 2000 A.D.'.
- The constitutional values of secularism should be upheld and widely propagated.
- Apex Research Institutions have been converted into places to promote obscurantist and communal ideas for political parties especially the Indian Council of Historical Research, ICAR, NCERT, IIT's and several Apex Universities. Political parties must make an open declaration accepting not to politicize and communalise Apex Educational and Research bodies funded by State Resources.

The 13th Lok Sabha election manifesto of the BJP like any other political party has tried to present the most populous face of the Sangh Parivar. Though some of the election slogans are revolutionary in nature but in reality they have remained in paper. This is because these promises were aimed at wooing only the voters but not to be put into practice. In aspects like Family Planning the BJP government like any other government of the past showed enormous urgency in introducing and implementing the policy but land reform, public distribution system, educational reform policies etc are shelved for ever. Even in these areas the BJP has selectively changed policies and subtly managed to introduce changes that will benefit its hidden plans.

From the above two general election manifestos as well as alliance partners few salient features of BJP's electoral politics come to the fore. Firstly, it becomes very clear that the BJP has for convenience sake aligned with parties with diverse ideologies and interests. If we carefully look at the different parties it becomes clear that the partners compose of extreme leftists/socialists to extreme rightists. Secondly, like the Congress party it has also tried to woo the common ordinary masses with popular slogans like ***bhookh*** (hunger), ***berozgar ko rozgar*** (employment for the unemployed) and ***bhrashtachar*** (corruption free governance). But in reality its top leadership itself was accused of scam and corrupt practices. Thirdly, while in opposition the BJP employed every means especially appealing to religious sentiments for political purposes, but while in power it calls for harmony, unity and oneness of mind, heart and action. For the first time it begins to entreat the public to rise above caste, class and religious differences. Fourthly, L.K. Advani who refused to pay heed to the request made by conscious citizens and undertook rath yatra, which led to riots and communal conflicts today has become the champion of a riot-free nation. Finally, the Brahminical social order which ostracized, outcasted and dehumanized the lower caste population has suddenly become conscious of the plight of the exploited castes and has promised to alleviate their sufferings. It is not argued that the Congress party that was at the helm both at the centre and in the states for 40 years has really been the champion of the poor and the downtrodden. But what is highlighted here is that the right wing BJP is also similar to the Congress in its projections. In reality it would like to see the Dalits, Tribals and the downtrodden to be eliminated from the face of this earth. Moreover, what is projected or promised by the BJP and the Sangh Parivar is one thing and its real interest is another thing.

The above mentioned fact can be highlighted by the utterances of the members of the Sangh Parivar. Acharya Dharmendra after the three-day 8th Dharma Sansad declared that 'political agenda may change but our agenda is fixed and there can not be any change in it. Hindu agenda alone was the national agenda'.[28]

In the last two years there seem to be some differences in the perception and mode of operation between the RSS and the BJP. This fact seems to be corroborated from the various reports that have been appearing in the national dailies. More importantly, BJP the political face of RSS has traveled a long way during the last two decades from its Jana Sangh days. The Jana Sangh had sectarian reputation. But the BJP today has managed to discard this image and has made alliance with all kinds of parties and even minorities. It has put the Ayodhay issue, Article 370 and the Uniform Civil Code on the shelf. But the RSS has not changed from its original goal. The Sangh is disturbed about the economic policies, the way the government is handling the Kashmir issue etc. It does not want the government to give up its long held views. It is also clear that BJP has not given up the controversial issues. But it is interpreting some of these issues in secular terms. Thus the tension between the two organizations are palpable.[29]

Once again, the citizen is not sure whether to believe that there has been some differences brewing within the Sangh Parivar. Though on some of the national issues the disagreements are reported but in the day to day interaction between the cadres and the leaders of these two organizations there seem to be no opposition. This is established by the participation of the BJP members in the traditional *Gurudakshina* ceremony. According to the original practice of RSS, every members of the RSS should give *Gurudakshina,* that is, should donate a portion of their income to the Sangh. This practice continues even today. According to a report, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister had to pay one month's salary to the Sangh on 11.8.2000. Thus the BJP's claim that it has nothing to do with the RSS so as to steer clearly away from controversies is proved false. *The Asian Age* reported that over 100 BJP MPs, including the Prime Minster and Home Minster gathered at Human Resources Development Minister's house and paid their *gurudakshina* to the RSS.[30] The 'collection' ceremony itself was presided over by the newly appointed spokesperson of the RSS. He once again made the RSS agenda clear: 'Politics is not the ultimate destination. The ultimate destination for any political leader is public service'. This explains both the undisturbed relationships that exist between these organizations and the real objective of the Sangh Parivar.

It is not only donating *gurudakshina* to the RSS that proves the close relationship between the BJP members but their non-participation in the freedom struggle too goes to demonstrate that they have been part of the same saffron upsurge. Though the BJP leaders once in power claim that they were also in the forefront of the independence movement, but this claim is far from reality. *The Frontline* journal's well researched article clearly establishes this fact that contrary to the propaganda made and the eulogizing that is done on the leaders by their biographers, the present Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee did not participate in the freedom fight. However, he was 'a part of the crowd' with no role to play in the militant events of 1942. According to this report Mr. Vajpayee himself has accepted this.[31] But there is another aspect to this story. In the run up to become the Prime Minister of India after waiting in the wings for 50 years, Mr. Vajpayee was projected as an avid participant in the freedom struggle. But once challenged with historical data, Mr. Vajpayee himself has denied it. This once again shows the double standard of saffron brigade.

Chronology of Events

Events, Personalities, Socio-Political forces that Influenced Nation Building

1829	Brahmo Samaj founded by Rammohun Roy.
1831	Calcutta Dharma Sabha was formed.
1835	Press restrictions made more severe.
1836	English is declared Court Language in British India
1853	Indian Civil Service (ICS) through competitive examination.
1854	Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch on Education
1856	The Religious Disabilities Act grants rights to ancestral property to the people converted from Hinduism to any other religion.
1857	Universities founded at Calcutta (January (July) and Madras (September).
1860	Enactment of Macaulay's Penal Code (Indian Penal Code). Kashi Dharma Sabha was formed.
1861	The Indian Penal Code (IPC) enforced.
1864	Satyendranath Tagore enters ICS, the first to do so.
1865	Dar-ul-Ulum founded at Deoband.
1870	Sanatan Dharma Sabhas to reinforce orthodoxy.

1871	Conducting of first Census in India. Cow protection movement surfaces.
1873	Mahatma Jyotirao Phule formed the *Satyashodak Samaj* to promote low caste consciousness.
1875	Swami Dayanand Saraswati founds Arya Samaj at Bombay.
1876	Indian Association was established in Calcutta which was to represent the views of the educated middle class and inspire them with an interest in politics.
1877	Syed Ameer Ali founds National Mohameddan Association.
1885	Establishment of the Indian National Congress. At this time a feeling surfaces that it is necessary to have a pan-Indian organization.
1886	Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was founded by Pandit Deen Dayal Sharma. It projected itself as the central umbrella organization for the network of Sanatan Dharma Sabhas. Interaction with Christian missionaries becomes more complex.
1889	A pamphlet named An Old Hindu's Hope was published in Calcutta.
1890	*Shuddhi* movement comes to the fore, which becomes an issue of social and political reform.
1893	Bal Gangadhar Tilak organizes Ganapati festival.
1894	Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha.
1895	Tilak organizes Shivaji festival.
1905	Partition of Bengal evokes widespread agitation all over the country.
1906	Establishment of the Muslim League in Dhaka.
1907	Hindu-Muslim riots in Comilla (now in Bangladesh)
1907-9	Establishment of Hindu Sabhas in Punjab.
1910	Hindu-Muslim riots in Peshawar.
1915	M.K Gandhi arrives from South Africa.
1916	Lucknow Pact (agreement between Congress and Muslim League).
1920	Muslim Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh raised to the status of Aligarh Muslim University.
1921	Moplah Rebellion in the Malabar region of Kerala.
1922	Formation of the Hindu Mahasabha.
1925	Formation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).
1926	Arya Samaj leader Swami Shraddhanand murdered.
1929	Under M.A. Jinnah's leadership, the All Parties Muslim Conference formulates its 'fourteen points'.
1932	The Communal Award imposed on India. Gandhi undertakes fast unto death against the Communal Award. The Poona Pact modifies the award.

1934 Jinnah returns from London to head the Muslim League.

1935 Rahmat Ali publishes a leaflet on the formation of Pakistan.

1938 V.D. Savarkar elected the President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha.

1939 Jinnah declares 22 December as Day of Deliverance of Muslims.

1940 Muslim League passes the Pakistan Resolution at Lahore. Though "Pakistan" does not appear in the Resolution.

1942 Congress adopts Quit India resolution.

1946 British cabinet announces formation of an interim government in India. Muslim League agrees to join. Congress refusal followed by communal disturbances in Bombay. Muslim League reverses decision to join the interim government. Interim government formed, Pandit Nehru sworn in as the Vice President. Muslim League declares 16 August as the Direct Action day leading to large-scale killings in Calcutta. Muslim League joins the interim government (13 October). Constituent Assembly convened (9 December).

1947 Independence and Partition of India. Large-scale Hindu-Muslim riots. Pakistani tribesmen invade Kashmir. Maharaja of Kashmir accedes to India (26 October).

1948 Gandhi assassinated by a Hindu fanatic.

1950 Constitution of India inaugurated. India declared a Republic. India offers a No-War Pact to Pakistan. Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact for the protection of minorities.

1951 Establishment of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

1953 Pakistan rejects No-War offers.

1954 Kashmir Constituent Assembly ratifies accession to the Indian Union. Special Marriage Bill providing for divorce by consent adopted.

1955 States Reorganization Commission submits report.

1956 B.R. Ambedkar and 20,000 people belonging to Scheduled Castes embrace Buddhism in Nagpur.

1964 International Congress of Orientalists meets in New Delhi. Death of Pandit Nehru. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) launched.

1965 Indo-Pak war. Anti-Hindi riots in Madras.

1966 Akali-Jana Sangh coalition government in Punjab.

1967 The peasant and labourers' upsurge in Naxalbari which later comes to be known as Naxalite Movement.

1969 Shiv Sena riots in Bombay. Congress Party splits.

1971 Bangladesh crisis. Indo-Pak war. Ten million refugees arrive in India from Bangladesh.

1972 Shimla Agreement.

1974 India conducts first underground Pokhran. JP Movement in Gujarat and Bihar

1975 Indira Gandhi declares Emergency. Twenty-six communal organizations including RSS, Anand Marg, Jamaat-i-Islami banned.

1977 Congress defeated. Janata Party in power. Jana Sangh merges into Janata Party. Janata Party and Jana Sangh form the ministry in the centre.

1978 Minorities Commission set up.

1980 Congress recaptures power. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launched renaming the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

1983 *Ekatmata Yagna* a religious march with political overtones conducted by the VHP.

1984 Conversion of Hindus to Islam at Meenakshipuram, Tamil Nadu. Assassination of Indira Gandhi. Eighth general election.

1985 Ban on worship of Hindu idol in Babari Masjid lifted by court order; revival of controversy. Supreme Court verdict in the Shah Bano case.

1986 Parliament passes the Muslim Women's Bill overriding the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case. L.K Advani becomes BJP President.

1989 Ninth general election. BJP's notable success.

1990 V.P. Singh's National Front government decides to implement the Mandal Commission Report. Advani's *Rathyatra.* Police firing at *karsevaks* in Ayodhya.

1991 Tenth general election.

1991-2 Murli Manohar Joshi's *Ekta Yatra.* This was undertaken to sensitize people about the danger to national unity posed by militants, particularly Sikh and Kashmiri Muslims.

1992 Demolition of Babri Masjid. Resignation of BJP government in UP. Dismissal of BJP governments in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

1993 Serial bomb blasts in Mumbai by extremist Muslims. Involvement of Pakistan's ISI suspected.

1994 Supreme Court upholds the dismissal of three BJP governments in 1992 and defines secularism as enshrined in the Constitution.

1996 Eleventh Lok Sabha election. BJP's 13-day rule. NFLF government comes to power under the 'son of the soil' Deve Gowda.

1998 Twelfth Lok Sabha election. BJP and allies form government, win vote of confidence in the parliament. National Agenda released. The nuclear test was done at Pokhran. In response to 'Buddha's smile' Pakistan too fired nuclear bombs.

1999 The Lahore Bus Trip of the Prime Minister in February. Kargil war under the Operation Vijay. Thirteenth Lok Sabha election was held in September. This was the last general election of the Millennium. Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin was one of the contentious issues. The BJP fought the elections in alliance with 24 partners.

2000 Celebration of 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' on July 26th. Formation of Jharkhand, Chathisgarh and Uttrakhand in the month of August. Reconciliatory talk with the militants operating in Kashmir generated hope for a lasting peace but it broke down.

[Source : Partha Ghosh. BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: From Periphery to Centre. John Zavos. The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India and various other reports.]

The above chronology of events emphasise the path the nation has passed through. It also depicts the phenomenal success of BJP. The BJP in 1996,1998,1999 government formation has kept the ministries of Information and Education to itself. By controlling the Ministry of Education, saffronization of education will be carried out to its logical consequence. By excessive and slanted glorification of the past, revivalist and reactionary values will be promoted. The RSS slogan that "Hindus is nationalism" will be stamped on impressionable minds through this process.[32] A glimpse of the future as visualized by the Sangh Parivar is incorporated in their draft constitution of India.

The New Constitution of Bharat

The New Constitution of Bharat as envisaged by the Sangh Parivar (draft given below) needs to be examined and the hidden agenda should be exposed. The first statement in the Preamble itself unravels the real intent of the RSS. It talks about security from 'external and internal enemies'. This has been one of the most repeated agenda of the Sangh Parivar. If we regularly pay attention to the utterances of the leaders of Sangh Parivar, we realize that the minority communities are treated as the enemies of the national interest. It also talks only about security from enemies but has no mention about the security of the Dalits, Tribals and women form the upper caste tyranny.

DRAFT OF
THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF BHARAT

WE THE PEOPLE OF BHARAT (also called INDIA), having solemnly resolved to constitute Bharat into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRTIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

SECURITY from external and internal enemies:

PROSPERITY;

JUSTICE, social, economic, and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR GURU SABHA this .... day of ....do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

ABVP's Constitution for Bharat

The most dominant body or organization of governance is the Guru Sabha in the proposed constitution. It states:

6.10 1) **Guru Sabha will decide the policies of the Union and of the States in all fields.**

2) Guru Sabha will divide the duties and responsibilities between the Union, the States and the Local Bodies. Guru Sabha will also provide for and create a mechanism to resolve any disputes between the states as well as disputes involving one or more states on one hand and the Union on the other hand.

4) All laws for the Union will be first introduced in the Guru Sabha.

6.22 The Guru Sabha will not be dissolved under any circumstances and the decisions of the Guru Sabha will have the same force irrespective of any vacancies therein.

Few excerpts presented above from the draft constitution of Sangh Parivar exhibit the Sangh Parivar's disdain for liberal democracy and advocacy of an oligarchy of "Gurus". As much is evident in its call to establish a "guru Sabha" elected from an electoral college comprising school and college teachers and research scholars and professors, to set the basic policies of the country. The Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet would merely implement and monitor the policies set by the Guru Sabha. In keeping with RSS's aversion to party politics, the all-important Guru Sabha will comprise solely of people free of any political affiliation. The Sabha occupies a central place in the draft's scheme of things. It is not only supposed to initiate bills for the Lok Sabha, but also decide on the appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court and review its functioning.[33]

A few salient features need to be taken into account here. Even a preliminary survey of the "draft of the constitution of bharat" unravels this reality that the Sangh Parivar has once again indulged in its double dealings. It has tried to maintain the format of the present constitution but in its content it has once again shown its bias in favour of some and against the others. As pointed out above the Sangh has brought to the fore its plan to rule this country and society by a group of so called 'gurus'. This is once again an attempt to capture the imagination of the common masses. But in reality it has strategically planned to control the social and political sphere of India by a group of men upholding the brahminical Hinduism. This will be the only permanent ruling structure and hence through this the Sangh will have total hold on the citizens of the country.

Dr. Ambedkar while drafting the constitution made special provision for the weaker section. In Article 46, very clearly directives have been given that the State shall promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections. This whole area is totally absent in the Sangh Parivar's constitution. Ambedkar was well aware of the fact that the Dalits have been reduced to landlessness, resourcelessness and voicelessness by the upper castes. Hence, he strongly demanded special treatment on the economic conditions and also demanded private property so that the Dalits also could possess land and other resources of life. The socialist and the communist leaders demanded abolition of private property but themselves were owners of vast property. Hence, they did not make substantial change in the lives of the masses. The Sangh is totally silent about this aspect. Moreover, by demanding 'uniform treatment' to every one it is closing the door of positive discrimination extended to the weaker sections and the minorities. Thus, the game plan of the Hindutva force is once again exhibited in this proposed constitution.

Concluding remarks

The above discussion highlights the causal link between the predominance of the Hindutva slogan and the drastic shift away from the socialist rhetoric in the economic sphere in the late Eighties.[34] But in the course of time the shift is witnessed in all the areas of social and national life. It is time to pause and take stock of the situation. The emergence of fundamentalist forces in all religions should be the cause for concern. But much more urgent matter is the need to identify and activate the political participation of the ordinary and toiling masses of our country. In the last three decades the Dalits, Tribals, women and the downtrodden among the minorities have asserted their right to live as citizens of this country.

The future of Indian politics lies with such forces that are able to perceive the potentials of (1) Such productive social castes/classes that are shaping rural economies, (2) Dynamics of regional identities, (3) The dangers inherent in the real agenda of the BJP viz One People, One Culture and One Nation, (4) Harnessing the strength and interests of socially and economically deprived sections of the society with those of women as a class, (5) Bridging the gap between the OBCs and the Dalits, (6) Shaping a development programme for the masses and not for classes.[35]

Hindutva is not a programme of action but a state of mind. It is a specific view of one's *Indianness or Bharatiya*, of one's cultural heritage and civilisational springs of the content of one's national ethos. The defining characteristic of this view is that it is exclusivist in nature: it admits of no diversity or dissent. But Hinduism itself is a highly pluralistic religion and Indian society is diverse in many senses. Hence, it is equally, if not more, communal to blame the entire community as being communally motivated. As has been shown in this presentation it is a small segment of the population that engages in communally conflicting course of action.

One can also understand the emergence of Hindutva force by analysing the 'rise and the fall' of Kalyan Singh in UP. 6 years after the demolition of Babri Masjid Kalyan Singh, the key figure in the demolition squad is thrown out of that very party, which he built up in the name of Ayodhya. He accused Vajpayee saying that Vajpayee has given up the issue of Mandir on which he came to power but for which Kalyan himself had given up power. Kalyan had played the key-role in this social engineering when he and others mobilized the kar-sevaks to demolish the mosque. (Kalyan comes from the OBC belonging to the Lodh Rajput community). Kalyan symbolized the synthesis of two movements that of Mandal and Mandir in UP. For the OBCs the Mandir issue meant social mobility in the caste order in the form of sanskritization. For the Hindutva force by placing an OBC at the highest realm it succeeded in roping in the upper castes and the OBCs. But with the temple receding to the background all the caste contradictions within the BJP in UP came into forefront. The upper castes at this stage felt that the OBCs had enjoyed power for too long, hence started promoting their own caste men in the person of Raj Singh. Hence Kalyan Singh lamented, " *Humko to mara apnon ne, Gairon mein kahan dam tha*". As the bickering within the BJP became severe, during the Lok Sabha elections Sakshi Maharaj a backward caste leader and a close associate of Kalyan joined Mulayam Singh.

Thus in the emergence of these leaders there is an indication of the emergence of their community. Some of them joining BJP also have historical note as the congress party used these people only as vote banks. The BJP has projected itself to be ready for dialogue with the leadership from the lower castes and classes. Whether the alliance of the leaders from the lower benefits the common masses from these castes is a moot question. But it will surely benefit the leaders. The leaders are not ready to risk their own fortunes for the sake of their community.

Significantly it is not only political parties that have constantly betrayed people of our county but individual politicians too have deceived the aspirations of the people due to their personal ambitions. The hotly debated news about P. Chidambaram's joining the BJP has once again exposed the personal ambitions of the political leaders, irrespective of the party they belong to. C.R. Irani states that P. Chidambaram, the former Rajiv Gandhi acolyte and active Congressman, who once stretched himself full length on a dais at Jayalalitha's feet, pleading for her support for a seat in parliament, when the Congress was allied to her and currently in Tamil Manila Congress which is almost in political wilderness is tired of being left out of active politics. Active politics means for Chidambaram a lucrative economic ministry.[36] It is individual politicians who are equally responsible for the decline in the political integrity of the country.

In this regard it needs to be stated that it is not only in the political arena where downward trend in ideology, morality and way of life has been witnessed. But the degradation has also set foot among the administrative sector. Note Praful Bidwai reports about the overall decline in the social commitment of the IAS probationers. According to him only 6% regard environmental protection as a high priority; 40% believe that they are above the law; 40% believe that it is important they should marry within the caste/religion; only 32% condemned corruption in civil services. These probationers when they come to the field are supposed to be the '*màliks, sahebs,*' of the entire district. Their own bias, their economic interest, their career building become the priority to them. In the entire bargain the common masses are the losers. As has been stated earlier, it is only by ensuring political participation of the masses changes can be introduced in the crisis-infested state and society.

The ten years of political participation of the Sangh Parivar through the BJP has necessitated the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to become political itself. Hence in the first week of August 2000, the RSS went 'public' and thus political by appointing an official spokesperson. The 77-year-old Bapuraoji Vaidya, an old veteran of RSS and a former *bhaudhik shiksha pramukh* (intellectual training chief) was chosen to head the publicity wing when it opened its *prachar vibhag*.[37] A few salient features of this move of the RSS may be mentioned here. The Sangh has opted for an elder member of the Sangh Parivar to present the 'right image' of the RSS. This is in line with its original policy of heading the various fronts with senior members so that change from its basic brahminical thought pattern does not arise. Secondly, it has once again opted for a Brahmin to head the public image building exercise. Thus, it has ensured the continuation of its fundamental policies. Finally, the RSS has thrown its own weight in the political arena of the Indian sub-continent. This is a bold move after 75 years of operating with hidden agenda or behind the curtain. The entry of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh into mainstream politics will surely colour the socio-political, cultural and economic domains of the Indian state and society. It is this new phenomenon that needs to be closely watched by students of political sociology.

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Most discussions of culture in India, as they take place in academic circles and the dominant media, tend to confuse 'culture' with 'civilization' and civilization with 'religion'. These discussions then prepare the ground for identifying the essence of Indian culture with brahminical classicism. Hinduism remains the centre of gravity in these confusions of culture, civilization and religion. Christianity, which has an older presence in India than most smriti literature is rarely regarded as an intrinsic part of this all Indian culture and is jettisoned, in the discourse of revivalist conservatism, to the domain of missionaries. Islam, which has an older presence than most of medieval bhakti, is itself regarded as marginal and additional.

Aijaz Ahmad

Chapter VI

Sangh Parivar and Cultural Distortion

The Understanding of Culture

Before we proceed to discuss the cultural manipulation engaged in by the Sangh Parivar, it is essential to understand the term culture itself. Culture has been defined in numerous ways by social scientists. E.B.Tylor gives one of the oldest definitions of culture. According to Tylor, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'.[1] This definition of culture focuses on the various forms of expressions that human beings develop and transmit for the future generation for better societal living. It also highlights the socialization process which reinstates cultural values and traditions in younger members of a society. According to Geertz, 'Culture denotes historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life'.[2]

Culture represents not only the customs and traditions but also ways of life of people. The cultural elements are produced in interaction with the other members of the society. They are also the outcome of the constant interaction with environment. From the various definitions it can be drawn that culture provides meaning and message to the thoughts and actions of human beings. It also determines the perspective towards individual and collective life. In general it can be stated that culture is akin to a map. A map indicates the various elements of a geographical region. Similarly culture depicts the varied environment of a social life.

From the perspective of the emergence of the Hindutva force, it is necessary to identify some of the salient features of culture.

Aijaz Ahmad in his discussion on 'The Politics of Culture' states that culture has been confused with civilization and civilization with religion. Against this revivalist definition of culture, Aijaz Ahmad argues that 'we need a materialist conception which looks at culture not as spiritual or religious heritage but as a set of material practices through which people live and produce meanings of their lives. The starting point for such an analysis is not the heritage of the past but the actual realities of the present, and one of the things that most crucially matter, then, is the degree of access to cultural goods –education, training in the arts – that different classes and social groups have in real life. When we look at culture in this way, we immediately recognize that social conflicts of various kinds, along lines of class, caste, gender, ethnicity, etc. actually leave little room for all the people, or even majority of the people, to have roughly equal access to cultural goods, that may be shared by 'a people' or a whole nation to any significant extent.[3]

Historically speaking in the given socio-cultural context, a vast majority of the rural toiling masses have been denied the access to education, training related to art and training related to employment. This already generates conflicts, which translates itself into political demand. These political demands further build up cleavages among the various segments of the population.

Aijaz Ahmad goes on to argue that culture is not then an arena for harmonious unfolding of the National Spirit. It is a field of contention and conflict, among classes and social forces that struggle for dominance. Every nation has at one time not one culture but several, and these contentions take not only the form of "**unity in diversity**" but also "**unity in opposites**". In this social scenario, the essential task in the politics of culture according to Aijaz is to combat the elitist, revivalist, communalist culture with its orientation toward the past and toward brahminical classicism. Instead of that kind of culture, we have to build a democratic, secular culture of modern civic values and radical equalities.[4]

The last two decades of national history has amply demonstrated the fact that it is next to impossible to create and sustain a secular and democratic culture as well as a egalitarian society.

Sectarian interests, communal interests, interests of the dominant forces, and interests of the establishment elite ultimately seem to triumph over every attempt to build a secular and democratic ethos, society and state. One also becomes acutely aware of the various forces that are operative independently as well as collectively to thwart every attempt to forge unity between secular and democratic forces at various levels.

Continuing the discussion in the same vein Aijaz maintains that the past decade has witnessed three fundamental shifts in the cultural field. First, the Hindutva forces, which used to be marginal to national culture in the days of the National Movement and in the opening decades of the Republic, are now the main contenders for political dominance and cultural hegemony, especially in North India. Second, economic liberalisation has vastly accelerated the creation of a pan-Indian culture of commodity fetishism which the electronic media is carrying far beyond the urban habitats of the bourgeoisie, fairly deep into the countryside. This has led to an immense brutalisation of day-to-day cultural life. Third, the lack of a national project for social justice and the acceptance of the supremacy of the market as the final arbiter of the social good. This is combined with full commodification of competing religiosities, has led to a new eruption of the savage identities of caste and denomination. And finally the above stated processes get intellectual respectability from the indigenist scholars for whom secularism is the sin of modernity while savage identities of religion and community are the very essence of what they call 'tradition'.

A two way process, thus, can be discerned from the above discussion. On the one hand, globalization of economy has also led to globalization of culture. With the onset of a new economic policy in India, trade restrictions are let loose and due to this various 'goods' capture the market. Often times, foreign goods and materials establish their monopoly in the market and finally they occupy vast space in our homes and hearths and thus our mental make-up too. This ultimately, reinforces a global culture, which often is an 'alien culture'. The Sangh Parivar, which never tires of eulogizing 'Indian Tradition and Culture', has like any previous governments surrendered these aspects of the country to the alien economy and culture. Thus, a double way process is going on at an enormous speed: **westernization of market and saffronization of culture.** Those who are engaged in these forms of economic enterprises stand to benefit, but the harm done to the national and societal culture is irredeemable.

Here it is appropriate to look at this two-edged assault that is going to create havoc in simple and nature friendly communities like the rural masses, the Tribal communities and the hill people. The Tribal communities, especially in the Jharkhand region are eco-friendly and they establish a symbiotic relationship with nature. But wherever the indigenous population settled, the non-Tribal outsiders moved in and took over their economic resources and slowly established their control over them. In 1771 when the Jharkhand region was brought under the East India company, this area which was rich with minerals and endowed with forest resources witnessed the worst form of plunder and loot. For the British colonizers, the Tribal belt provided only rich market for raw materials. It did not provide them any market for sale of their products. Thus, the economy transaction at that juncture was only a one way process.

In course of time, with the colonial rulers, the upper caste businessmen and industrialists migrated to the Jharkhand region. They too like the colonial rulers continued to plunder and pilfer the Tribals of their natural resources and environment. But unlike the colonizers they did not stop with grabbing the riches of the region. The Jharkhand region offered them with enormous scope to market the finished products. Thus the internal colonizers have double profit, they appropriate all the resources of the Tribals and they also sell the finished products and make double profit. This process once again has devastating effect on the Tribal communities. On the one hand they lose out their traditional artisanship, as well as the economic gain since the market provides them with these material. On the other hand, it opens up flood gates for the non-Tribals to invade the Tribal region. But the most alarming reality is that the business brigade of the Sangh Parivar has flooded the markets with those items that are counter to the culture of the Tribals. This is especially true of the audio and videocassettes of all nature. This has deleterious and destabilising impact on the entire Tribal communities.

Saffronization of Education

From the above discussion let us focus on the saffronization of education that has been going on from the time the Sangh Parivar came into power in various states as early as 1991 as well as in the centre from 1998. From the various writings and utterances of the Sangh Parivar leaders, it can be gathered that Hindutva is not a programme of action but a state of mind. It is a specific view of one's *Indianness or* being *Bharatiya.* Hindutva is one's cultural heritage and civilisational mainstream and also one's national ethos. Even a cursory glance at this perception reveals that the defining characteristic of this view is exclusivist in nature. And it admits of no diversity or dissent. But Hinduism itself is a highly pluralistic religion made of many streams often contradictory in nature and Indian society is diverse in many senses.

The democratisation of education is universally recognised as integral to a secular and democratic polity and society. There are two interpretations about what democratisation of education is. One view tends to equate democratisation with universalisation. But this does not seem to be a reality. Even after fifty years of a democratic polity in place, such a holistic concept of democratisation has not yet become central to educational policy and practice. More alarmingly, democratic education, which is also secular in the Indian context, is under serious strain due to the recent communal inroads into it. The second interpretation is that in a class society education being a part of the ideological apparatuses of the state, the struggles for its democratisation has a broader political and cultural meaning. Here the democratisation of education serves the purpose of the class in power.[5]

The educational reform in independent India had to contend with the legacy of colonialism. Every report on education recognised the importance and urgency of overcoming the colonial legacy. Yet, it was not realised in practice, because firstly, the perpetuation of the political and social power of the elite was to a great extent linked the with system. Secondly, the political decolonisation did not coincide with the decolonisation of mind. The Indian intelligentsia continued to live in a colonial mental ghetto, thereby failing an easy prey to neo-colonial theories and intellectual practices. The education system, therefore, lacked the necessary intellectual authority to democratise the content of education.

The democratisation of education fundamentally draws upon three As: Access, Autonomy and Authority. Developing a system of education based on these principles is now facing a major threat from two sources: communalisation and globalisation. Given the demographic profile and the cultural configuration of India, a democratic and national system of education cannot but be secular. Any departure from the secular ethos will be detrimental to the well-being of the republic. The recent attempts by communal forces to saffronise education spell danger to democratic polity and society.[6] But the Sangh Parivar has been making systematic attempt to take over the educational institutions so that they can achieve their objectives.

The Ministry of Human Resources Development has embarked on the task of changing, with success, the composition and character of apex research and educational institutions like UGC, NCERT, ICSSR, ICHR etc. It is also planning to start self-financing courses imposing exorbitant fees ranging between 10,000 to 25,000 rupees. Murali Manohar Joshi said angrily, 'why shouldn't we say that 50% of our people are literate, instead of saying 50% are illiterate.[7] Thus the Hindutva force is once again trying to influence the minds of the students. Instead of accepting the reality, it is trying to impose its mindset on the students. Many of the left student bodies have strongly opposed this move.

The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) almost from its inception identified education as an area of special attention. It followed a strategy of catching the cadres young through ideological work and providing facilities for physical training. In an article entitled, 'We and Our Students', M.S. Golwalkar outlined the Sangh's educational perspective. He proposed a system of education that is fundamentally religious in character, with emphasis on tradition, discipline and military training. The RSS has been engaged in implementing these ideas by following two strategies: one, infiltrating the existing educational institutions and second, organising a network of schools of its own.

During the last two decades the Sangh Parivar has made major gains in both these areas. The access to power in some states and in the centre has provided the possibility of controlling the educational institutions and of revising the curriculum in consonance with the perspective of Hindutva. In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh where the BJP has been in power, it has recruited its cadres to schools and colleges.

Panikkar goes on to caution that a more alarming development is the hurry in which the Parivar has tried to change the character and content of education. During the last fifty years a secular system of education, though with limitations and weaknesses, has managed to survive. The Parivar is busy dismantling it by giving it a communal colour. The governments of U.P., Rajasthan and Delhi tried to introduce a Hindu curriculum by revising the textbooks, particularly of history, literature and civics. All of them have tried to imbibe a communal consciousness in the minds of young children. The committee of experts set up by the NCERT found these books positively harmful. About a textbook on mathematics in U.P. in which vedic mathematics was introduced, the committee observed as follows: "The committee has examined this matter and has come to the conclusion that these additional materials not only present false notions on the history of mathematics and India's contribution to one of the basic branches of knowledge but would also promote obscurantist notions of Indian culture and civilisation which would be destructive for the growth of schemes in India."

This attempt of the Sangh Parivar should not be viewed in isolation. It should be seen as forming part of the wider game plan the Hindutva force has chalked out. One instance of this could be seen in the choice of its ministry. The BJP government in 1996,1998,1999 government formation, has kept the ministries of Information and Education to itself. By controlling the Education ministry saffronization of education will be perfectly done. By excessive and slanted glorification of the past, revivalist and reactionary values will be promoted. The RSS slogan that "Hinduism is nationalism" will be stamped on impressionable minds through this process.[8] Even in the Orissa government, where the BJP is a junior partner with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), it has wrested for itself ministry of education and culture. Thus, it is part of the wider game plan of the Sangh Parivar to control educational system and thus control mind and society.

It is important to examine the method employed by the Sangh Parivar to manipulate the minds of the future generation. Panikkar argues that given that history is used to demarcate the Hindus as a nation and to stigmatise the Muslims and the Christians as anti-national, the history textbooks are singled out for special attention. The project, India's past is not even remotely connected with known facts of history. It is basically a falsification of history. They assert that Aryans were the original inhabitants of India, that the Indian civilisation and culture are basically the work of the Aryans, that ancient Indian culture is the true Indian culture, that Indian civilisation is superior to every other civilisation, and that ancient India's achievements in science, mathematics and other branches of knowledge have not been surpassed by other civilisations till today. The interesting fact is that they glorify the achievement of India in all sciences and look down upon other countries, even though many of them educate their sons and daughters abroad.

Panikkar also exposes the scheming nature of the Sangh. While the governments of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh only nibbled at the education system, BJP led government at the centre sought to impart a saffron colour at the national level. At the meeting of state education ministers in 1998 Murali Manohar Joshi proposed a new system of education prepared by a group of experts drawn from a RSS education outfit, Vidya Bharati. Some of the recommendations of this group were as follows:

- The curriculum from the primary to the highest level of education should be Indianised, nationalised and spiritualised. At all levels of education and in all courses, even the vocational courses, essentials of Indian culture should be introduced from 10 to 25 percent.
- Moral and spiritual education should be introduced at all stages in all the schools and the universities for inculcation of character and desirable social and national values.
- The curriculum should be enriched through its indegenisation,

addition of in-depth study of historical, sociological, philosophical and cultural aspects of teacher education.

* Sanskrit universities should be established in four zones of the country. Research on outstanding Sanskrit works should be encouraged.

* The Supreme Court of India has already defined Hindutva as a way of life and not a as a religion. In the light of this decision, the experts recommend that India's valuable heritage of the Vedas and Upanishads should find due place in the curriculum from primary to the higher level courses, including the vocational courses.

The message conveyed by these recommendations is clear: what is national is Hindu. And the Parivar would implement a Hindu system of education whenever they are in a position to do so. Needless to say, it would undermine secular education and create a society steeped in obscurantism, sectarianism and false-religiosity.

Tampering with School Textbooks

The Hindutva force has not limited its activities to constituting committees to make recommendations; it has moved in a high speed and done some tampering with the textbooks. The BJP is of the view that the school textbook has been written in a way to prove that the Muslim rulers were secular and if at all they displayed orthodox Islamic tendencies it was for political reasons and that here is a tendency to downplay the Hindu rulers. The party is committed to rectify this. But interestingly, the question of tampering with the textbooks was witnessed in the Hindi belt, Gujarat and Maharastra as early as 1966. The committee set up to look into the matter reported that there was a Hindu bias in the textbooks and historical events were presented in a manner as to arouse and perpetuate prejudice against certain religious groups. Hindu beliefs were presented in a manner as if they are universally held by all Indians.

It is the Sangh government which has surpassed the previous records. A book called *Gaurav Gatha* prescribed for Class IV, declared that the Qutab Minar, whose creation is popularly credited to Qutabuddin Aibak was built by emperor Samudragupta and known as Vishnu Stambha. A book *"Itihas Gaa Raha Hai'* states, "we went on winning one battle after another. We never allowed foreign rulers to settle down but we could not reconvert our separated brethren to Hinduism". This is the game of the wounded psyche.[9]

It is not only the method adopted by the Sangh Parivar that is alarming but also the volume of efforts made to saffronize education that calls for serious analysis. The educational strategy of the Parivar is not limited to infiltration through government agencies. As early as 1942 the RSS had initiated steps to organise its own educational network. An all India Organisation, the Vidya Bharati Shiksha Sansthan, was set up in 1978 to plan and conduct its educational work. Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Vidya Bharati, Gyan Bharati and Gita Vidyalaya are the various nomenclatures through which the educational ventures of the Sangh Parivar go on in this country. In 1992 the Sansthan claimed to run 6,000 schools with 1,200,000 students and 40,000 teachers. It is estimated that in 1999 it has about 20,000 schools under its control, imparting education to about 50,00,000 students.

These schools actually implement the Hindu system of education. These also become the breeding ground for communal politics. Various reports indicate that those who are associated with these schools were the ones who took part as the kar sevaks, that is, demolition squad at Ayodhya. Though state governments have prescribed curriculum for educational institutions yet wherever the BJP was and is in power it has reworked the curriculum. Where it is not in power, it has through extra curricular activities and extra-reading materials have managed to mould the minds of the younger generation. The Parivar's publishing houses like Sanskar Bharati Prakashan and Bharatiya Shiksha Samiti produce books for these schools. Through these books, the Hindutva forces continue their cultural distortions. Above all, through these publications, the Sangh also earns enormous money to carry out its publication as well as other activities.

The books prescribed in these schools seek to imbibe a Hindu religious consciousness and pride of being a Hindu, for which, among others, both geography and history are invoked. The map of India drawn in all these books is that of Akand Bharat, not only with Pakistan and Bangladesh as part of it, but the entire region of Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet and Mynamar also included in it. Even the familiar geographical names are changed to suggest Hindu connection: the Indian Ocean is renamed Hindu Maha Sagar, the Arabian Sea is called Sindhu Sagar and the new name for the Bay of Bengal is Ganga Sagar.

The inspiration for this type of history writing comes from V.D. Savarkar's book *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History*. These textbooks present the history of India as a heroic story of Hindu resistance against foreign invasions. With scant regard for historical veracity these books portray how the Hindus defeated the invaders one after the other and preserved the freedom of India. The description of Muhammad Ghori invasion may be cited as an example: "Muhammad Ghori killed lakhs of people and converted Vishwanath temple and Bhagawan Krishna's, birth place into mosques. He took Prithviraj to Gazni, but Pritviraj killed him there with one arrow and Muhammad Ghori corpse lay on the feet of Prithviraj as if narrating the tale of his sins." Even the anti-colonial movement is described as the struggle of Hindus against the British.

During the Ramjanmabhoomi movement the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) published a book entitled, *Ayodhya Rakth Ranjit Itihas* (Blood Stained History of Ayodhya), according to which there were 78 attempts since 1528 by the Hindus to reclaim the Ram temple. This myth, propagated all over north India at that time has now been incorporated in several textbooks used in the schools run by Vidya Bharati. In one of them entitled, *Sanskrit jnan Pareeksha Prashnottari* (Examination of knowledge on Culture, Questions and Answers) it is presented in the form of catechism to be memorised by students:

> How many devotees of Rama laid down their life to liberate Rama temple from AD 1528 to AD 1914?
>
> Three lakh fifty thousand.
>
> How many times did the foreigners invade Sri Ramajanmabhoomi?
>
> Seventy-seven times.

What was the number of the struggles for the liberation of Ramjanmabhoomi, which was launched on 30 October 1990?
78th struggle.

From the above presentation one can once again gauge the *modus operandi* of the Sangh Parivar. Over the period, the Sangh has developed a way of presenting numbers and playing with the emotions of the people. Many religions use this question and answer methodology to impart religious training. This mode of advancing knowledge is very useful for the less educated people. But the Hindutva force uses it in a large scale to initiate communal cleavages in the educational curriculum. Choice of terms like 'foreigners' is also very objectionable. But the child, who goes through this lesson constantly, would react instead of responding to a child from the so-called 'foreigner' community. Much deeper plan the Sangh Parivar achieves through this methodology is that it manages to mould the mind of the learner in such a way that the child fails to see the enormous oppression and exploitation that goes on within one's own community and perceives the existence of the 'other' as the major threat to his community's existence. It is this phenomenon that needs to be addressed to by the experts in educational field as well as by concerned citizens.

The Sangh Parivar is pursuing an educational programme with a view to developing an alternative system. The HRD Minister's attempt to extend the privileges granted to the minorities by Articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution to all others is actually an attempt to promote this system. So is the recent attack on the Christians as they run a fairly large number of educational institutions. Hence, the recent attacks on the Christian minorities should not be looked only as an attack on another community but as an effort to stifle the educational spread among the disadvantaged communities. Since most of the so-called missionaries are persons from other states than where they are working, it is also extremely easy to incite the emotions of the 'local citizens' to attack them. Once they move out of the place it becomes easier for them to take over the educational activities of that place.

About the books on history prescribed in these schools the NCERT Committee has this to say: "There is little in these books that is historical. In their violation of history as a form of knowledge, these books perhaps have few others to match them. Written in a highly provocative language and style, they present an extremely virulent patriotic view of what they consider Indian history." These were the voice of dissent within the establishment. But the attempt by the Human Resource Minister Mr. Joshi to appoint persons who would 'reinstall' the 'Indian culture and tradition' has closed the door for any kind of dissent.

Significantly, for these kinds of total destruction of the real culture and tradition of India Dr. Joshi has been awarded with formal degrees and acclaim. A report published in Indian Express on 4th May 2000 tells its own tale:

Name: Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi
Qualification: Ph. D. from Allahabad University in 1958
Joined RSS in 1944, arrested in 1948, joined ABVP in 1949.

Recently Dr. Joshi was given a honarory degree by the Benaras Hindu University. Some of the reasons highlighted in the citation letter from the Faculty of Science of the Academic Council of the Benaras Hindu University for nominating the Human Resources Development Minister for the honorary Doctor science degree are as follows: "Dr. Joshi is consistently active for the construction of a grand temple at the birthplace of Sri Ram, a place of paramount significance in the context of our religious tradition and social icons of dignity, representing lofty humane and superhuman values. He also participated in the famous Cow protection movement and launched a satyagraha against Al Kabeer, the slaughterhouse."[10]

The staff and the students have challenged this decision by one of the prestigious universities of India. Most of the faculty members as well as others are aware of the fact that this minister who never tires of depriving teachers of their due on the so called grounds of accountability has never taken a single class for 25 years that he has drawn a salary. This is also the first time a degree is being conferred on an active politician. The same university had awarded honorary degree to Rabindranath Tagore and Nelson Mandela. The citation also highlighted that Joshi is a staunch champion of Swadeshi and Hindutva. Significantly, Joshi was chargesheeted in the Ayodhya demolition case but the council despite objections ignored this fact. But this is not anything alarming. When 'sycophancy' overtakes persons, reasons are relegated to the background.

Panikkar also makes a very pertinent observation about similar exercise undertaken by the minority Muslim community. He states that 'the books used in schools run by some Muslim organisations project an equally communal view of history and society. The textbooks published by Harkazi Haktaba Islami of Delhi and prescribed in schools in Uttar Pradesh are examples. Like the books produced by Parivar these books also take a religious view of society and explain historical developments only from a religious viewpoint. These books, the NCERT committee observes, "present an extremely narrow view of the subjects they deal with. In the name of developing an Islamic viewpoint and religiosity, these textbooks foster all kinds of irrational and obscurantist and narrow sectarian ideas and, in many ways, a communal outlook." There is remarkable similarity in the approach and methods of communalists, be they Hindus or Muslims'.[11]

Another equally important development in the political culture of Indian polity needs to be examined here. The Supreme Court of India gave a verdict in August 1999 that, 'Admission to the highest available medical courses in the country at the super speciality levels, where facilities for training are limited, must be given only on the basis of competitive merit. There can be no relaxation at this level'.[12] From this judgement the highest court of this country once again opened up the age-old debate on merit over special provisions. The ruling class once again managed to appropriate all the avenues open for social mobility and closed the door on the disadvantaged communities. But soon the BJP government made a public statement that reservation benefits will be extended for another 10 years. This is not to just hold on to the Dalit vote banks but also the brahminical order was frightened that the Dalits would move out of the Hindu fold and would define themselves not only against the brahminical social order but also contradictory to the upper caste brahminical world. The BJP's interest is to Hinduize Dalits and it is this reason that forced the Sangh Parivar to announce the extension of reservation.[13]

Politicization of Culture

Ananth Kumar, the Minister for Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports stated that 'there is a proposal to form the **National Reconstruction Corps** (NRC) to engage youth volunteers to imbibe citizenship qualities, develop their personalities and to engage them in nation building. There are 32 crore youth outsides the university system and they will be given priority. Over 12 crore rupees will be spent on this. He also spoke about the *Vande Mataram Abhiyan*, beginning form the 12th of January 2000. For this 3 organizations namely, Nehru Yuva Kendra, National Cadet Crops (NCC) and National Service Scheme (NSS) will mobilize the youth to various activities ranging from rallies to seminars.[14]

On face value the above mentioned scheme appears to be a meritorious one. But given the track records of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar, one wonders about the real intention of the minister. In the official circle it is being discussed in hushed tones that whoever is part of the ruling party now can get any project cleared. It is immaterial as to the outcome of the project.

The last decade witnessed a consistent attempt by the Sangh Parivar to politicize culture. The schemes worked out by them are multifarious. Two interconnected facts need elaboration here. First, for the Sangh Parivar with its political face BJP in power, it has become extremely easier to utilize the state machinery to appropriate funds as well as to utilize the personnel to carry out its sinister activities. The minister in-charge of youth affairs has done this in the most unassuming manner. Secondly, the Hindutva force has also built on from the existing systems and organizations. From NCC, it is not difficult to move to NRC. The Sangh Parivar 's ability to play on words and achieve its objectives is at its zenith in this realm.

It is also crucial that we explore the process of politicization of culture as attempted by the Sangh Parivar. The Sangh has followed different methodologies in different situations and regions. The strategy of building up these front organisations has been guided by local circumstances. Panikkar in Kerala, for instance, where a number of village temples were in a stage of decay, renovation committees have been used as a ploy to attract the believers to the fold of Sangh Parivar. The meetings of these committees, with kirtans, religious discourses and semi-political speeches, were effective platforms for the propaganda of Hindutva. Those who participated in them for purely religious reasons were soon turned into supporters of Hindu communal politics.[15]

The Sangh Parivar also uses the most aggressive forms of cultural assault to elicit cultural response. On the runup before the demolition of Babri Masjid, Sadhvi Ritambhara's talks depict the epitome of aggressive politicization of culture. On the one hand, she invoked in typically religious style, the dance of destruction of Shankar, that is the *thandav nirtiya* of Shiv, the God of destruction. I too stood among thousands of listeners in the main chowk of Aurangabad town in Bihar and I could feel the communal stirring swelling up in the listeners as Ritambhara shouted from the high pitch of voice, "*Shankar ko ek bar bum ho ne do*", that is, let the destructive powers of you be unleashed on the Masjid which is the symbol of Muslim invasion. On the other hand those who wanted to protect the Masjid, she called them '*napunsak*', that is eunuchs.

Two facts need to be highlighted form the above narration. In the first place, it is these kinds of highly provocative speeches that led ultimately to the destruction of the Masjid. The emotions of two groups of people were attacked in this process. On the one hand, those listeners who were religious they were converted to become communal due to the invoking of the highest symbol of destruction, Lord Shiv himself. On the other hand, those who were religious but communally neutral were challenged when they were challenged of being 'impotent.' Significantly, the Sangh Parivar has been constantly playing on the emotions of people and achieves its objectives. At a closer look, as argued elsewhere, one also realizes that the use of a mendicant and a celibate to address the public gatherings in the most emotive note and directly challenging the virility of men added fuel to the fire. It is this aspect that the Sangh Parivar experimented in the Ayodhya destruction.

Cow as the Political Symbol

The Sangh Parivar has been constantly on the search for newer symbols or providing new meanings to existing symbols. Ernesto Noronha assesses that in the assembly elections in 1993, just after the Babri Masjid demolition, the BJP was defeated in 3 of the 4 states which it administered. 1) The hardcore within the party felt that it was due to diluting the Hindutva platform, 2) stressed broadening the party's appeal by taking up issues having social, economic, and international overtones. Even at that time it was felt that the Ram Janmabhumi would remain the central symbol, while newer symbols would be created to keep the communal inferno burning.[16]

From the gamut of symbols available, the BJP seems to believe that the cow can to some extent, enliven the attenuated Ram Janmabhumi symbol. This can be derived from 2 events. 1) The demonstration in front of Al-Kabeer slaughter house where it was alleged that the killing of cattle was designed to rob the country of the cattle wealth. 2) Enactment of the Delhi Agricultural Cattle Prevention Bill which made the slaughter of cows etc, non-bailable offence with imprisonment upto 5 years and a fine or Rs.10, 000.

In this analysis one should not mistake the wood for the forest. Cow slaughter has never been used as the primary symbol by the Hindutva forces but has been used intermittently as a secondary symbol to incite communal violence. Slogans like, the following were used freely: ***gau ki raksha, desh ki raksha***, that is, 'protecting cow is equal to liberating your country'. These types of slogans have been used to elicit national fervour. But the heart of the matter is that these are attempts to engineer communal hatred and conflicts. Historical records state that Gandhiji also was keen on cow protection but he was against making cow protection acts and societies. But this became a big controversy in the constituent assembly. Some of the Hindus wanted to make ***'go-hatya'*** equivalent to 'untouchablity' and equivalent to ***'brahama-hatya'***.

This issue came up once again in 1966, when the Shankaracharya of Puri announced fast unto death if cow slaughter was not stopped. During the same period, the Bhoodan leader

Vinobha Bhave also raised lots of hue and cry about cow slaughter. But he failed to raise the issue of the Tribals who were fleeced by the moneylenders, oppressed by the forest officials and the contractors. The story repeats itself with regard to the fundamental forces, especially the right wing fundamental forces. On 12th June 2000, a group of Sangh Parivar members under the banner of 'Ban on Cow Slaughter Forum' staged a dharna on the streets of Delhi.[17] It was exactly the same time that unbearable misery and hardship was unleashed on the people of Gujarat and Rajasthan by severe drought.

Interestingly, another argument is presented by the proponents of ban on cow slaughter that cow is useful for the supply of milk, traction power and dung, but too much of it is a burden on the land and due to this the quality of the cattle is also deteriorating. But the BJP uses the proposal made by Shradanand that the Hindu *rashtra mandir* is devoted to *gomata, saraswatimata and bhumi mata*.

The Hindutva forces use a symbol like the Ayodhya temple to arouse the sentiments of the Hindus. But they also use secondary symbols like celebrations of festivals, wearing saffron bands or caps, introducing the *rath-yatras*, wielding of *trishsul,* and raising jai shree Ram etc. The symbol of cow is also used like this. The Muslims on the other hand organise *kurbani* festivals and intensify cow slaughter. But this apathetic reaction of the Muslims did not increase the vote bank of the BJP. The BJP's attempt to make cow as the symbol may not draw support form the backward castes since the backward castes do not worship as much as the forward castes though they worship the Hindu gods.

Another area that the Sangh Parivar constantly utilizes is the attempt to highlight the sense of Martyrdom. This exercise is carried out in a systematic manner so as to draw the young and the old in a sense of national fervor but ultimately it enables it to incite communal feelings among one community and communal hatred towards other communities. For instance, after the Kargil war, the Sangh Parivar went all out to elicit a sense of reverence to those who were killed in the war. It renovated and renamed some parks in the name of the martyrs. For example, the park near Jawaharlal Nehru stadium in south Delhi has been named after Captain Ahuja.

In itself this act is commendable. But the BJP has consistently refused to accept the security lapses in the entire Kargil region. It does not bother to provide all the facilities to the soldiers in that difficult region.

Moreover, one year after the Kargil war, the Sangh Parivar and the BJP carried out an elaborate celebration in the name of "Kargil Vijay Diwas". At the expense of government exchequer, the Sangh Parivar managed to project itself as the champion and defender of this country from external enemies. A nation has the responsibility to remember in respect its martyrs. But the attempt to politicize this glorious act in course of time is going to lead to communalization of military and armed forces.

Also, the Sangh Parivar indulged in localising the heroes of the Kargil war. The chief of the RSS released the book on the martyrs of Uttaranchal in Vittalbhai Patel House in New Delhi on 15th July. The fact of the matter is that instead of recognising the contribution of all those who were martyred the attempt to localise the martyrs will lead to parochialization. Moreover, both the RSS and the BJP leaders attended for the function.[18] But the RSS and the BJP always claim that they are two separate organizations. The presence of a minister in these functions points to the Sangh Parivar's nefarious activities.

Another field the Sangh Parivar has effectively harnessed is the media. It has a publication in every language, in some cases more than one. It even controlled a vernacular language news service. Panikkar affirms that in 1970 this news service had 1000 correspondents spread over 24 news centres, whom either overtly or covertly contributed to the dissemination of communal ideology. Although this news service had to be disbanded during the Emergency, the supporters of Hindu communalism have succeeded in having a substantial presence in almost all newspapers. This is not accidental, but the result of a well-planned strategy. Consequently, several newspapers now carry the Hindutva clamour without any restraint and several others endeavour to strike a balance between the secular and the communal. One suspects that the secular is increasingly losing out in this struggle.

Thus, the Sangh Parivar is moving in a steady manner to enter into every walk of Indian society and state and establish its ideology. Whether it is the print media or the electronic media or the fold media it has been making a big headway to assert its presence. These are only a few areas or instances where the Sangh Parivar has made enormous inroads. Through all these efforts the Sangh Parivar is bent on creating a Hindu character and not an Indian character. This Hindu character is posed against the Muslim character and Christian character which mistrust leads to mistrust and paves way for communal hatred and riots.

So far the secular forces, despite their positive assertions in the recent past, have not been able to stem the communal advance. There are indeed several reasons for it. One of them is the divergence in basic assumptions of the contending forces: namely the secular and the communal. Their notions of political principles and behaviour also vary. In other words, they do not share a common ground rule. The Hindu communal approach to nationalism, in a way, reflects this disparity. When Golwalkar and his present disciples dismiss anti-colonial nationalism as negative and champion Hindu cultural nationalism they are in fact rejecting some of the positive modern ideas generated by the anti-colonial movement--democracy, secularism and civil liberties. The Hindu communal political culture is devoid of these fundamental principles of modern polity enshrined in the constitution and accepted by our society as central national life. In their place Hindutva has adopted and pursued coercion, hatred and intolerance. In ordering their activities, the secular forces do not seem to take cognizance of this reality. They appear to believe that the Parivar would respect democratic norms. These events, hoever, amply prove that this belief is totally misplaced. Consequently, this method of challenging communal forces needs to be changed and changed fast.

What we have witnessed in the last fifty years and specially in the last 10 years is the escalation of appropriation of cultural ingredients. This has ultimately resulted in cultural alienation. Cultural alienation can be defined as the exclusion and the discrimination of a group of people who practice some other form of culture. This does not mean that the cultural practices of these two groups are fundamentally different. There may be some commonalties between these two groups. In a society, where people are perceived as different on the basis of religion and in a special way on the basis of communities, cultural alienation means the projection of the 'other' as the real enemy. In the Indian context, cultural alienation results in dehumanization and discrimination of one community by another. In the Indian situation the proponents of Hindu nationalism, in the name of majority unleash atrocities on the minority communities.[19] This process as argued in the foregoing pages in course of time lead to breach of trust and breach of peace. The minority community, which undergoes a sense of cultural alienation at all levels, begins to react, instead of responding meaningfully to the crisis situation.

Concluding remarks

Before we conclude this chapter a few important pointers for the future need to be identified and highlighted. Panikkar argues that the Sangh Parivar's educational agenda is more than mere instruction through schools. They have well formulated schemes in different areas to transform **communalised knowledge into social knowledge**. Apart from the large scale pamphleteering during the last many years which has sought to **replace the secular commonsense with a communal commonsense**, they have devised all India schemes to make their knowledge easily accessible to people. The district histories reportedly being written by an organisation sponsored by the RSS is a part of this endeavour. Once these communally tailored local histories are made available the real history of the people is likely to be marginalised.

With regard to culture another important fact needs to be highlighted. The most projected cultural forms of India till 1980 has been that of the metropolitan and a secular culture. In this process, the folk culture and the religious culture of the common masses and the lower segment of the society were denied an existence and at times discarded as a pile of cards. But the metropolitan as well as the so-called secular culture was nebulous for the majority of common ordinary Indians. Only a select minority of the Indian elite had the use for these forms of culture. The Sangh Parivar utilized this constant neglect of the masses and popular cultural forms and built on the emotions of the common people. This provided the greatest platform for the Hindutva force to achieve its various objectives.

It is also realistic to accept the fact that education as a means of inculcating one's cultural principles has been going on in society. History bears testimony to this fact that every reign and rule utilized education to advance their ideology. This was done in two ways. On the one hand, the rulers opened the doors of education only to a select minority or only to their offsprings. This was a way to keep the others out of the system. On the other hand, they all attempted to provide some leverage for learning so that those who do not belong to their social group may be brought under the 'mainstream'.

The brahminical social order has put to use education to further its own ideology. In the past, it denied access to any form of learning to the Dalits and the lower castes. It had also propounded stringent injunctions to those who break their dictates. Manusmriti is full of injunctions of this nature. Today, when the Brahminical social order is surrounded by a make belief 'threat' it is attempting to bring the Dalits and the downtrodden into the so-called mainstream. To achieve this aim the Sangh Parivar is bringing Sanskrit learning to the lower castes. This again is the trick played by the Sangh Parivar. The sons and daughters of the leaders of the Sangh obtain 'English medium convent education', while the children of the lower castes are provided with Sanskrit language which is a dying language.

At this juncture, it is urgent to realize that the Hindutva forces are not in fact altering the character of education. They are in effect, extending the frontiers of education. It is logical to realize this fact that they themselves are the products of the present educational system. The educational system followed at present was originally aimed at producing 'babu' or what was known as clerks, who would help the colonial rulers in their interaction with the colonized. The education offered then was aimed at producing men who would execute power and also attain power. Even after 53 years of independence neither the curriculum nor the objectives of education have undergone radical change. The Sangh Parivar used the decadent educational system to train persons who would execute the commands given and not critically look at the issue at hand. Thus, the educational system itself has become a powerful weapon in the hands of the Hindutva force to direct the minds of the students to be communally biased.

The Sangh Parivar is aware of the fact that the cultural arena and in a special way education and sports are the main sources of ensuring organization and discipline. These are the two areas of human life the fascist forces all over the world utilized to curtail the protests and revolts of the younger generation. On the other hand, these regimes also used these fields as opium to dupe the youngsters to be obedient and 'well behaved'. The so-called English medium convent schools have provided the best platforms for the Sangh Parivar to recruit readymade cadres who come out of these schools.

In this entire exercise, the most sensitive fact is that the Hindutva force is focusing the entire attention of the future generation, on communal aspects. An all out attempt is made to engage in political mobilization and political participation on religious or to be correct on communal issues. The minority communities respond directly on communal terms. Thus, the purpose of the Hindu communal nationalism is to project the minorities as communal and thus need to be chastised is achieved without much effort. Thus, in the process, non-issues take centre stage. It has also an added objective, that is, by focusing on non-issues, or comparatively less important issues, the Hindutva forces have totally relegated to the background or dwarfed the burning issues like caste atrocities and oppression, tribal alienation and exploitation, discrimination against women, and violation of all forms of human rights. In this attempt the Sangh Parivar has been most successful. Hence, the need of the hour is to realize the game plans of the Sangh Parivar and to oppose it in all the domains. One should restrain from becoming communal in one's response and thus playing into the trap of the most atrocious and monstrous Sangh Parivar.

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It seems a Hindu is born only when the Muslim enters. Hindus cannot think of themselves as such without a simultaneous awareness of the Muslim's presence. This is not so for the Muslim, who does not need the Hindu for self-awareness. The presence of Hindu may increase the Muslim sense of identity but does not constitute it. Little wonder that Hindutva needs "the Muslim question" for the creation of a united Hindu community and the expansion of its political base and, in fact, will find it difficult to live without it.

Sudhir Kakar

Chapter VII

Ayodhya: The Endless Beginning

*Ayodhya was projected as a symbol of grave assault on Hindu faith itself. By referring to the Muslims as Babur ke Santhan (children of Babur), the Muslim community as a whole was held responsible for acting against the Hindu faith. Ayodhya thus became a site for constructing Hindu solidarity and avenging the Muslim wrong. The effective communication of this dual meaning enabled the Hindutva to advance. – **K.N. Panikkar.***

*In spite of the troubled history of our country - foreign invasions, civil wars, and frequent periods of intense oppressions, misery and economic distress, the stream of Indian culture continued to flow - and we could create one of the richest and the most variegated culture of the human race. – **Sajjid Zaheer.***

Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi tangle is one of the most controversial issues that not only shook the Indian sub-continent but also many south Asian states. As the demolition of the Masjid and the attempt to build a temple at that very site led to national crisis and resulted in communal riots, that was only next to the riots that followed after partition. Similar to the conflicting perception about the question of Masjid or Mandir, there are also conflicting records put forth by different groups about the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumi Mandir. Since the origin of the Mandir or the Masjid is of antiquity, it is difficult to ascertain as to whether the Masjid came first or the Mandir was already present there.

Some people retrace the history of Ayodhya from very ancient time. According to them, King Vikramaditya is said to have renovated the temple in Gupta period in the 5th century. Which means the temple itself was constructed much earlier. The proponents of this theory state that the existence of Ram Janmabhumi shrine at Ramkot, making what was believed to be the birth place of Ram, the holiest spot on earth in the 12th –13th centuries, is well attested by its description in the Ayodhya Mahatmya, of the Vaishnava Khanda of Skanda Purana, narrating the glory of this shrine. They also maintain that on the advice of Sufi Saint Jalal Shah, Minister Mir Baqi was ordered by Babur to replace the temple by a mosque in 1528 A.D. Ever since, the Hindus have been longing to see the resuscitation of the temple at the site which they hold as extremely sacred.[1]

There are some others who begin recounting the history of Ayodhya from 1528 when the Masjid was supposed to have been built by Mughal Emperor Babur in Ayodhya, a city whose name literally means a place of no wars. This site of the Mosque is claimed by some Hindus as the place where there was already a temple marking the birthplace of Lord Ram.[2] Interestingly, BJP's White Paper on Ayodhya itself begins the history of the temple-masjid from 1528 only. According to this report, 'There is clear and irrefutable historical proof available to establish that the Hindus had repeatedly attempted to recover the Janmabhumi by military efforts and diplomacy which were the only means available to fight the lawless alien rulers. There are unrecorded traditions of many military expeditions by the Hindus between 1528 and 1707 for repossessing the Janmabhumi. For the present purpose the chronology is limited to the recorded history. The recorded history shows that at least from 1735 the Hindus had consistently attempted to recapture the Janmasthan and re-establish the Rama temple'. [3]

It is appropriate to explore not only the use of historical records for the support of one's argument as done by the BJP, but the manner in which it mobilized public emotions for achieving its purpose. This the BJP did well by focusing on the religious emotions of the people for political mobilization. It always focussed its attention on religious symbols and objects. 'Rama, Ramayana and Rama Rajya are great symbols of national integration and are national idioms, which provided continuity consistent with the culture and ethos of this great nation. Whether the State in this country helped to make the temple of Rama or broke them as the invaders did, the loyalty of the nation was always to the values which Rama symbolised. The nation in India always remained Hindu, whether the State was controlled by the Turks, Afghans, Moguls, Portugese, French, English or Nehruvian Secularists'.[4]

From this projection of Ayodhya as the National symbol, the BJP has successfully drawn the attention of the majority community that it has been historically wronged. Hence, it has the legitimacy in a democracy to right the wrong done to it by alien and hostile forces. Secondly, its manipulation of the religious symbols to arouse emotions of the common voters of India and to alienate the others who till this period have lived in communal harmony and amity. Thirdly, the Sangh Parivar has been successful in projecting the state as different from the nation and has also managed to project the state as the main villain in the entire episode. Finally, for the BJP's history of the Indian subcontinent begins only from the arrival of the Muslims. This serves two purposes of the BJP. On the one hand it manages to focus on the Muslim rulers as the real enemies of nationalism. On the other hand it has also tried to wipe out from the memory as well as from historical records the invasion by the Aryans, an invasion which was equally disastrous towards the original settlers of India if not much severe towards them. In the entire 'struggle for Janmasthan' the BJP has tried to absolve itself and the upper caste rulers of their inhuman treatment towards the Dalits, Tribals and women from the downtrodden communities.

To understand the Ramjanmabhumi-Babri Masjid issue, one also should look at the emergence of Saffron wave in the 1980s. The decade of 1970 was crisis bound in more than one sense. The Congress party, which was in power at the centre and the states, was losing its hold on the voters. Its various slogans like the 'Garibi Hatao' and the 'Twenty Point Programme' etc, did not cut much ice with the voters. The political and economic decline ultimately led to the Gujarat and Bihar movements in 1974. These movements finally culminated in the imposition of emergency. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was voted out of power and the Janata Party in which the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was a major partner also formed the government at the centre and most of the important states of India. This in turn brought the BJS in the political centre stage of India.

The parent body, the RSS on the other hand found the climate conducive for its own expansion and development. It now devoted most of its energy to relaunching the original project of Hindu Nationalism, Hindu Sangathan, and the organization of Hindu society. With the Ekatmata Yatra (One Mother campaign) in 1982-1983 in South India, where the Sangh Parivar had nominal presence, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad became the main vehicle of this strategy. The VHP was reorganized and expanded in the course of the many campaigns organized by the Sangh Parivar. The RSS already had its shakhas in most of the areas. But the VHP also formed local units in the 1980s, which became the local wheels for agitational politics. Both these units collaborated in the achievement of their objectives.

The VHP did not limit its activities to only mobilising the local units for religious purposes. These local units were also used to renovate and expand temples, collect funds, and to organize social works like distributing food, education of women etc. They were also trained to be active during the festival seasons, organize religious mandals, keertan Sabhas, etc. At the level of city, region and state, the VHP also worked to bring influential industrialists, politicians, and leaders of religious sects together on platforms of Hindu unity, or as honorary supporters or benefactors of large religious congregations, rallies and conferences.

A new emphasis was also put on the literal representation of religious unity when the VHP organized a series of local *margadarshak mandals* (council of spiritual guides) in several regions and a central mandal for the entire country in 1981. In 1984 all these efforts were put together and the VHP formed the regular body of the sadhus, the *Dharma Sansad*, which began to organize nationwide congregations (*Sadhu Sammelans*) in various parts of the country in order to deliberate and discuss "vital spiritual problems". In the same year, the *Shri Ramjanmabhumi Maukti Yagna Samiti* (the Committee for Sacrifice for the Liberation of Lord Ram's birthplace) was formed and in September 1985 a series of processions and marches to Ayodhya was launched from twenty-five places in north India alone.[5]

A glance at the headlines of the national dailies on the day after the demolition reveals the different reactions expressed about the demolition of the Masjid. These headlines also bring out the various actors involved in the demolition and those who are supposed to guard it.

BABRI MASJID DEMOLISHED,
CENTRE SACKS KALYAN GOVERNMENT
The Hindustan Times

President's rule in U.P.: Assembly dissolved
OUTRAGE IN AYODHYA:
BABRI MASJID DEMOLISHED
Sharma deplores vandalism
The Hindu

REBELLIOUS KAR SEVAKS DEMOLISH
DISPUTED STRUCTURE AT AYODHYA
Four killed as domes cave in
Indian Express

'Sevak' Demolish Vabri Masjid
Central rule in UP: BJP takes blame; nation betrayed, says PM
The Times of India

MASJID RAZED, PRESIDENT'S RULE IN UP
Red Alert in UP, other states
BJP denies hand in demolition
A great pity, says Supreme Court
The Pioneer

Ayodhya: Political Mobilization Against & For a Place of Worship

K.N. Panikkar in his observant analysis of the Ayodhya issue argues forcefully that, 'The secular polity of India was considerably convulsed by the mobilization of Hindus around the construction of temple at Ayodhya. Launched and led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, with the active support and participation of the BJP and the RSS, the temple campaign was religious only in form but political in content. It was a project pursued in religious idiom by the BJP and its front organizations, the Sangh Parivar, for political ends. In 1991, the BJP's main electoral plank was the 'Hindu' demand for the temple at Ayodhya. This nexus between religion and politics proved to be extremely rewarding to the BJP -- it won as many as 118 seats in the parliament and emerged as the main opposition. More importantly, it came to power in four north Indian states -- Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh- and reported its presence in almost all other states.[6]

Panikkar goes on to assert that the Ayodhya movement enabled the BJP to expand its electoral base rather suddenly. In the past, the BJP and its predecessors had not found much favour with the electorate, despite their efforts to champion the Hindu interests. In fact, when the BJP had fought the election without allying with other parties, it had managed to win only two seats in the parliament.

According to Panikkar, in the past, religious denominational parties like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League had functioned within the secular polity. In course of time, very few could resist the temptation to take recourse to religion for electoral gains. This departure from the secular premises of the Constitution was linked with three important factors: 1) The increasing religiosity in Indian society, 2) the decreasing popular base of the Indian National Congress, 3) the ambivalent nature of secularism as practiced by the state.[7]

Contrary to earlier polity, the sangh parivar promoted the concept of cultural nationalism as the positive nationalism of India. The emergence of Hindutva within this cultural nationalism did not have space for other religious minorities. According to Ashok Singhal, the President of the VHP, 'A lasting government will be a Hindu government. If people do not like it, they can go to the country of their choice. Otherwise they must live at the mercy of the Hindus.[8] They have, during the last few years pursued the mobilization of Hindus by forging internal solidarity and external non-Hindus, particularly the Muslims.

A connection between religious identity and political interests had not become part of the consciousness of Hindus. The Hindutva movement unleashed by the *Sangh Parivar* was an attempt to create such a connection. Within this the movement for construction of a temple at Ayodhya to replace the Babri Masjid, initiated by the VHP, brought about a qualitative change. It appealed to emotions through belief systems. As K.S. Lal, a historian of the Hindutva fold argued, "In religion it is a matter of faith and not of proof... So by faith alone Muslims believe Muhammad to be the Prophet of Allah, and by faith and faith alone Hindus believe Ramajanamabhumi in Ayodhya to be the birthplace of Lord Ram.[9] The sanctity thus attributed to Ayodhya not only underlined its Hinudness but also made the construction of the Muslim-other easier. The alleged destruction of the temple by Babur was not just a desecration of an ordinary place of worship but a grave assault on Hindu faith itself. By referring to the Muslims as *Babur ke Santan* (children of Babur), the Muslim community as a whole was held responsible for acting against the Hindu faith. The Babri Masjid was thus embedded in Hindu consciousness as a symbol of Muslim aggression against the Hindus and their religion. It also represented the collective humiliation of Hindus which remained unmitigated for centuries. **Ayodhya** therefore became a site for **constructing Hindu solidarity** and **avenging the Muslim wrong**. The effective communication of this dual meaning enabled the Hindutva to advance.[10]

A few social facts need to be laid bare here. Panikkar argues that in projecting the idea that the entire Muslim community is responsible, the VHP shifted the terrain from faith to historical facts. But in reality it was not to remain at the realm of historical facts but to move on to political manipulations. This was the objective of the BJP. This game plan of making the Babri Masjid an emotional issue, the Sangh Parivar in turn provided the BJP enough fodder for political gain. But it is also significant to note that the Ayodhya issue was a plank for political mobilization only till the demolition of Babri Masjid on 6th December 1992. Because in the election that ensued after the election, the BJP lost in Uttar Pradesh where it hoped to emerge as a single majority party.

It is important to realize that the demolition of Babri Masjid was not a one-day reality. A whole series of activities finally culminated in the demolition of the Masjid. Ram *shila puja* performed form 30th September to 6th November 1988 was the turning point for the hindutva movement. It confirmed the assumption that Ayodhya could serve as a powerful symbol for Hindutva communal mobilization. The unprecedented response the VHP received was as much due to religious appeal as its organizational ability. The BJP's mouthpiece, the *Organiser* clarified the purpose of the puja: 'firstly, it is a mass contact and mobilization programme which emotionally involves and integrates the Hindu society to a national cause. Secondly, it is a programme which connects every individual to the national memorial of Shri Ram. Thirdly, the dharmacharyas of all the sects of Hinduism have come together on a common platform and are actively participating in mass mobilization of Hindus'.

During the Ram *shila puja*, the sense of insecurity among the Muslims was at an alarming rate. More dangerous, however, was the 'subterranean tension' it created between the Hindus and the Muslims throughout the country. Even the VHP did not rule out riots. While riots did occur in Madhya Pradesh, the other parts of India lived in fear. But to the sangh parivar, it opened the road. One symbol of Ayodhya has been tested and found rewarding; more could follow.

The VHP's programme of Hinduisation and anti-Muslim propaganda continued unabated even after the shila puja. The posters, stickers and audio-video tapes the VHP produced aplenty besieged homes and market places with the Ayodhya message. They prepared the ground for a more intense mobilization undertaken by the BJP President, L.K. Advani, through the Rathyatra from Somnath to Ayodhya. One of the slogans used which also became part of a bhajan was, *Saugandh Ram ki khate hai, hum mandir wahin banayenga*, that is, 'We swear by Ram that we will build the temple there'. The *rath yatra* was preceded by a sustained ideological propaganda through print and visual media to implant the image of an angry Ram in popular mind. In contrast to his traditional tranquil, compassionate and benevolent image, the poster and books circulated by the Sangh Parivar depicted Rama riding a *rath* and pulling his bow string, the arrow poised to annihilate. In some pictures he was even carrying a *trishul*, a sword and an axe. Interestingly, Advani who refused to pay heed to many concerned citizens not to undertake the yatra, today has become the Home Minister and is talking about consensus politics. This is again another indication of the double dealings of the BJP.

The 'chariot of national spirit' of L.K.Advani finally turned out to be 'chariot of fire'. From the very begging the yatra created tension between the Hindus and Muslims, even in localities far removed from its route. Between 1 September and 20 November, 116 communal riots occurred in which 564 people died [See Table 7.1]. Enthused by the success of Ram shila puja and Rath yatra the sangh parivar tried to keep alive the connection with Ayodhya through a series of other symbols associated with Ram like, Ram Jyoti, Ram Padula, Ram Prasad, Ram Pataka, Ram Gulal etc. Ram Jyoti became a powerful means of mobilization. It is a torch lit at Ayodhya, multiplied into many torches and then sent to thousands of villages where people were expected to light their Depavali lamps. Mainly organized by the Bajrang Dal, it became a programme to demonstrate 'Hindu muscle and pyromania'. A senior police official felt that Ram Jyoti was potentially more dangerous than *rath yatra* which went through a pre-charted route, thus making it virtually impossible to monitor. But in the final analysis, the mobilisation was not for religious cause, but for a political goal. A former Member of Parliament stated, "The election campaign has begun. The real question is whether or not Ram Bhakti will translate into votes".

Table 7.1 : Number of Riots and Casualty

S.No.	State/UTs	No of riots	Casualty
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4	27
2.	Assam	1	7
3.	Bihar	8	19
4.	Delhi	-	8
5.	Gujarat	26	99
6.	Karnataka	22	88
7.	Kerala	2	3
8.	Madhya Pradesh	5	21
9.	Maharastra	3	4
10.	Rajasthan	13	52
11.	Tamil Nadu	1	6
12.	Uttar Pradesh	28	224
13.	West Bengal	2	6

[Divided We Stand. Delhi Forum, N.Delhi 1992]

Panikkar calls our attention to another vital factor. Isolating it from the realities of material life heightens the irrational character of the movement. None of the vital social or economic problems facing the people figured in the campaign. The starvation deaths of Tribals in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, lack of drinking water in Rajasthan and cold wave deaths due to inadequate clothing in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were outside the Hindutva concern when the rath yatra traversed through these regions. Understandably so because focus on them might change the priorities of the people.

Writing in similar vein, Lele argues that the mobilization of majority is attempted in a variety of ways: invocation of cultural symbols, aggressive political demonstrations like rath yatra and very deft use of 'consciousness industry'. The underlying features of all these have been violence to religious sensibility and appropriation of popular dreams and memories. The rath yatra and related campaigns for the temple at Ayodhya underlined political irrationality and religious coercion. The 'pedagogic violence' of the Hindutva, however, has a larger purpose. It is a response to the need to reinforce a once taken-for-granted hegemony of Brahminism because its premises have been untenable under the conditions of disintegrated hegemonies and the pervasive impact of the new world disorder.[11]

Lance Brennan while discussing the Ayodhya and communal violence maintains that "the issue of mosque did not blow up rapidly but it took its final shape in November 1992 when then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, decided to pursue a 'legal' rather than a 'political strategy'. That is, when he accepted the assurance to the Supreme Court of the BJP Chief Minister of the UP, Kalyan Singh, that his government would prevent the Hindu volunteers from damaging the mosque if they were allowed a symbolic ceremony nearby. Rao's argument against dismissing the BJP government of UP rested upon the constitutional ground that he could not dismiss a state government without due cause, and that given the promises of Kalyan Singh he did not believe that they would mislead him. By handing the problem of the mosque to the Supreme Court he was, as he stated later, getting it off his back. Thousands of para-military personnel were stationed near Ayodhya by the centre, but whether they were used was determined by the state authorities. When they were not called on and the state forces allowed the volunteers to tear down the mosque, Rao cried 'foul'. As communal rioting broke out across India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, he imposed President's rule in UP and three other BJP ruled states, declared RSS illegal alongside four other communal organizations, had some Hindu leaders arrested, removed the remaining volunteers from the site, and promised to rebuild the mosque.[12] Rao had clearly been outmaneuvered by the forces of Hindutva: in order to prevent a confrontation with them he had taken the easier road-the one where he was safer from charges of overstepping his constitutional prerogatives against Hindus with the associated political damage. They had duped him and he was left to attempt to repair the damage to India's secular democracy without at the same time bringing down his own government.[13]

But Brennan's argument also has some serious pitfalls. It is clear like daylight that the various fronts of Sangh Parivar are on the warpath to destroy India's secular democracy. Instead, they want to establish once again the brahminical monopoly and hegemony. But to take it for granted that the Congress which had been in power for the last four ,decades was secular and democratic is also going against the track records of Congress both at the centre and at the states. Rao who was termed as crypto-BJP or pseudo secular himself is to be blamed for the destruction of Babri Masjid and the communal violence that followed after that. Moreover, Rao could neither save himself nor save his government from a thorough debacle in the next elections. For four decades, the Congress built its vote bank on the strength of Muslims-Dalits-Adivasis-Upper castes. Now the Sangh Parivar succeeded in building a comprehensive Hindu vote bank among the same social base and the one who contributed in a big scale is the Congress.

This event differed from the previous confrontations in many senses. Generally in the past the various levels of the state had been anxious to prevent violence or actions which lead to violence, even if their interpretations of the event may have differed. But here was the Chief Minister who **misled** the Prime Minister and the Supreme Court and then prevented a subordinate from restraining people from an act, which he must have known, would cause widespread violence. But the violence ensured the Muslim vote bank for the Congress and the weakening of the Muslim presence in the police. Thus once again the Congress gained at the expense of the Muslims.

Ayodhya and New Hindu History

Gyanendra Pandey carefully analyses the events that led to the demolition of Babri Masjid and identifies the attempt to write a new history by the Sangh Parivar. 'Ayodhya which may serve as shorthand for the right-wing Hindu movement of recent years, has thrown up anew the question of the meaning of the Indian past. It has also threatened to establish as a new orthodoxy among large sections of the Indian middle classes, a new chronology of Hindu-Muslim military contests in India, and, underlying this, a renewed belief in the inevitability of such contest given the character of the people on the two sides'.[14]

Gyanendra asserts that explanations are plainly inadequate to account for the rise of new history writing. A powerful political movement, with massive financial and organizational resources, has led to the widespread dissemination of this historical propaganda. A ready explanation for these has made for the acceptance of this kind of history. They do not tell us why other powerful political movements, say, of the left, and other available explanations have not had the same kind of impact. They seem not to recognize, either, that the widespread acceptance of the Hindu version of the history of Ayodhya, for example, has contributed greatly to the rise of the new Hindutva movement: not just the other way around.

The Hindu right's use of the local language reflects – or perhaps produces – a sensitivity to a language (and to linguistic/cultural sensibilities) that English-speaking secular academics and journalists in India could certainly learn from.

Gyanendra draws our attention to the pulp quality of the histories of Ayodhya, produced in plenty in recent years by Hindu enthusiasts. Sold or distributed along with audio cassettes, badges, posters, images of gods and goddesses and other memorabilia, moral tales and books of common prayer and devotional songs by Hindu right-wing sympathisers, in Ayodhya and elsewhere, these pamphlets -- produced in very cheap and short-lived editions, crudely written and poorly printed on rough paper -- seem scarcely worth the attention of intellectuals. But the power of the political movement with which they are associated, and which they reflect and reinforce, makes one turn to them.[15]

Gyanendra presents an example to show the nature and the repetitiveness in these propagation materials. For example:

Shri Ram Janambhumi: Sachitra, Pramanik Itihas, Ayodhya 1986. (An Illustrated and Authoritative History of Shri Ram Janambhumi; the booklet itself provides the translation as "An Illustrated and Authentic History' and the 'authenticity' is underlined by the announcement that the author has an M.A. and Ph.D. in Archeology and History).

Shri Ram Janambhumi ka Pramukh Itihas, date and place of publication is not given. (The Authoritative and Authentic History of Shri Ram Janmabhumi).

Shri Ram Janambhumi ka tala kaise khula. Shri Ram Janambhumi ka Romanchkari Itihas, Ayodhya n.d. (How the locks were opened? The Horripilating History of Shri Ram Janambhumi.

Shri Ram Janmabhumi ka Rakt Ranjit Itihas. Tala kaise Khula? Ayodhya, n. d.(The bloodstained history of Shri Ram Janmabhumi. How the Gates were unlocked?

Mukti Yagya. Shri Ram Janmabhumi ka Sampurna Itihas, Ayodhya, 1991. (Sacrifice for Liberation. The entire History of Shri Ram Janmabhumi).

The **sequence of events or chronology** according to this new history that provides the core of these works is also noteworthy for its marked repetitiveness. This chronology appears as follows, with only slight variations of dates and numbers as between different accounts:

1. 9,00,000 years ago -- Birth of Ram: hence of Ramjanambhumi (RJB)

2. 150 years BC (Greek & Kushana Times) – Battle to liberate RJB.
3. 100 years BC – Vikramaditya's rediscovery of RJB & construction of grand RJB temple.
4. Salar Masud's time – 2 battles to liberate RJB.
5. Babar's reign- destruction of temple, construction of osque; 4 battles to liberate RJB
6. Humayun's reign 10 battles to liberate RJB
7. Akbar's reign 20 battles to liberate RJB
8. Aurangazeb's reign 30 battles to liberate RJB
9. Sadat Ali of Avadh's reign 5 battles to liberate RJB
10. Nasiruddin Haidar's reign 2 battles to liberate RJB
11. Wajid Ali Shah's reign 2 battles to liberate RJB
12. British rule (1912 & 1934) 2 battles to liberate RJB
13. 1857 Attempted compromise between Hindus and Muslims over RJB thwarted by British machinations.
14. December 1949: Appearance of Ramlala that is in the form of infant, and installation of images of Ramlala, inside the mosque. Building locked by administrative order to maintain the peace.
15. 1986: opening of locks on Babri Masjid/RJB temple.

Note that this chronology, based on one of the earliest in the new series of Hindu histories of Ayodhya, which is explicitly acknowledged as the source of some of the later accounts, gives a total of 79 battles fought by the 'Hindus' against the Muslims except 2 against the British for the liberation of the Ram Janmabhumi. The magic number was, however, subsequently fixed 76 which is the number of battles supposedly fought since the time of the Mugals, with whom the history of Muslims in India is readily equated. The battle for the liberation of RJB was launched in mid 1980s was therefore referred as 77.

The point of this history is to enumerate the many occasions when 'the Hindus' have risen in defence of the janmabhumi, and to catalogue their enormous sacrifices. Some of the material begins with the note that '77 Battles have been waged and three hundred thousand that is 30 lakh lives have been sacrificed by the Hindus for the protection and liberation of the Ramjanmabhumi mandir.

From the above presentation, two obvious features of Hindu history can be culled out. 1) Numbers appear to be important here not only for their suggestion of statistical accuracy and historical precision. For example, 77 battles fought and 700 hundred soldiers of Babar's army were killed with his sword alone in just three hours by Devi Din Pandey. This valour was in the face of a constant rain of bullets. Further, the history tells of Devi Din's inevitable offering of his own life in this process. Numbers are important too, in fixing the boundaries of the community or nation 'Us' and 'Them'. A pamphlet entitled 'Angry Hindu? Yes, Why not?' states " I (the Hindus) form 85% of this land, why should I be denied my rights? The Hindu has now awakened'. 2) In these histories of Ayodhya there is a straddling of the worlds of religious and historical discourse. They are prefaced or headed frequently by an 'OM', a mantra or a long prayer to Shri Ram. They begin in the age of 9,00,000 and more years ago, and they are marked by an easy intervention of the divine.

The BJP's White Paper on Ayodhya names its presentation, 'The Relentless Hindu Struggle for Ramjanmabhumi'. According to the BJP the struggle itself was waged in three phases:

Firstly, by **military expedition and war diplomacy**, when barbaric aliens were ruling the country and there was no Rule of Law;

Secondly, by **legal means**, when the British established their model of Rule of Law from 1885;

Thirdly, by **mass movement** from 1984, along with legal steps when Rule of Law became insensitive to their legitimate plea even under indigenous dispensation.[16] Once again the attempt to read history from one's vantage point of view is clear from this claim of BJP.

Any attempt to understand the working of the Sangh Parivar and its various front organizations need to analyse these kinds of moves by this fraternity. The entire operation takes place under a very systematically planned and executed network. They are not done in any half-hazard manner. These kinds of new creation of histories are aimed at appealing to the emotions of the majority community. Though the source of appeal is the religious objects and issues, its trajectory is aimed at maintaining the hegemony and the monopoly of the upper caste brahminical social order. By projecting that the 'struggle to liberate' the site for the construction of temple was ceaseless the BJP has managed to establish continuity with the past. It has also managed to assert that this continuation of the devotion is in line with older tradition that Ram was born there. The usage of both written records and recourse to traditions is an endeavour to make ones claim historically legitimate.

Post-Ayodhya Situation

Javed Alam makes a critical analysis of the post-Ayodhya situation from the perspective of the emergence of Hindutva force and the response from the minority Muslim community. He is of the opinion that, 'inorder to combat the forces let loose by the Hindutva and to create an alternative politics will depend on how the left and democratic forces understand this phenomenon. The capture of the cities and towns has occurred through a new kind of militancy in which terror and violence-not only against a certain religious community and society-are predominant. In this sense, the Hindutva politics is a form of terrorism; the politics of which allows you, in the absence of majority support, to employ force to silence those who may not be with you'.[17]

Javed Alam argues that 'Three types of social forces have played a key role in the capture of the urban areas. 1) The sadhus and sants and an assortment of figures with religious clout in the forefront. 2) A sizeable section of ordinary people who are otherwise a part of the exploited and oppressed section of the population. By no stretch of imagination can these people be considered as a lumpen crowd even if the politics in which they are active is undoubtedly of a lumpen variety. 3) The elements organized under the Bajrang Dal. All kinds of school dropouts, gangs of misfits, criminals and such other elements make-up the body called Bajrang Dal. This is the element that is used for crimes. When the lumpen-criminal have a political cover for activity in the name of the sacred with some degree of conviction then the self-esteem of these elements also goes up; they cannot any more be simply looked down upon as the 'scum of the society'. Thus, the anti-social elements under the religious and political coverage loot, rape and engage in death and destruction. They settle score with their enemies irrespective of the caste, class and religion the enemy may belong to. The anti-social elements get integrated with the majority communal elements and minority communal forces and unleash a reign of terror. The most fundamental aspect of this development is that the common Indian is caught in the cease-fire between these communal forces.

Javed Alam points out to another significant area that has been sidelined by the Ayodhya movement. According to him, 'The success of the Hindutva forces in silencing other forms of rural politics, in the sense that whatever may be happening there can no longer easily get channeled into the national political process, has been based in their ability to bypass and overrule the institutions of the state and those of the 'civil society'. The Hindutva force has reactivated the hitherto politically dormant institutions of the traditional religious orders like the mutts, the ashrams, the temples and a host of such other religious establishments. These institutions though religious in nature have also come to attain political significance'.

A new basis of legitimacy is being created in the political life of the society. An act of political importance is now being validated in a transcendental manner. While the BJP may go on insisting that it does not want a theocratic state, one important side of theocratic politics is to seek sanctions in a realm outside of human reasoning, that is in a supernatural force. The political platform created by the BJP-VHP-Bajrang Dal for the construction of the Ram temple, even before it vandalised a place revered by another community, has been doing exactly this. In fact, the Hindutva force has created a number of new institutions like Dharma Sansad whose actions are self-validating; none can question their pronouncements, which have a kind of papal authority with a finality of its own. With this what then becomes of the modern institutions of the contemporary society and politics is of dire consequence.

In the context of the politics of Sangh Parivar and the background of the demolition of the Babri Masjid, what are the long term consequences for Muslim communal politics? Among other things, Muslims overwhelmingly remain convinced that the Indian state was a party to the destruction of the Mosque. By deliberately remaining paralysed, they believe that the state also connived in the making of the 'make-shit' temple complete with Ramlala idols. Muslims all over the country were initially shell-shocked. In many places, this situation saw Muslims coming out into the streets in protest, giving way to counter-violence and widespread killings at the hands of the police. Even after six months after the event, bewildered and angry, they do not know whether anyone sees them belonging to India. The questions uppermost in their minds are: what is their position in India? Can they rely on any institution of the state to protect their lives, limbs and livelihood?

Javed Alam also draws our attention to the crucial fact of the response of the minority Muslim community. In such a mood, a tiny section among the Muslims is emerging which is prepared to stake everything to fight those 'out to destroy them'. I have heard Muslim youths saying they will sell gold and property to buy weapons. They want to fight back because, "we do not want to die like dogs as we have been for the last three years (*kuton ki maut nahin marenge*). It does not need a majority within any community to create havoc in society. Given the charged atmosphere in the country, a crazy act of revengeful, shortsighted, violence by a minuscule section of Muslims could trigger a chain of actions and reactions.

Before we conclude this section, we need to pose to raise this question 'How do we understand the game plan of the BJP in relation to the temple issue?' Krishna Ananth in his article 'The Game plan of BJP needs to be understood' points out to one important area. "Forced by its allies, the BJP was forced to disown its past. But then the reality is not all that plan; and the most appropriate statement to this effect came from none other than the BJP's president, Mr. Kushabhau Thakre. In his own words, "Ayodhya was only on the BJP's programme and never the party's ideology". He must have known what he was talking about and so must have those in the RSS. According to him while any programme has to be time-bound, the ideology is not. In other words, Mr.Thakre had conveyed that the Ayodhya issue was only an aspect of the BJP's ideological movement and that construction of a temple there was not the end in itself.[18]

Any endeavour to comprehend the game plan of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar also need to take into account the jugglery that these communal organizations engage in both written and spoken media. The BJP President Thakre's interchange of the terms like ideology and programme and their usage is nothing but an attempt to indulge in trickery. But in this use and misuse of terms, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar has communicated its message that the Ayodhya struggle is only a means to attain certain objectives. Neither the BJP nor the Sangh Parivar operated with the illusion that their struggle will come to an end, once the Ram lala's temple is constructed at the disputed site at Ayodhya. The Ayodhya issue was hijacked by the BJP to reach where it is today. That is to become the ruling political party of India after waiting in the wings for 40 long years. But this again is not the ultimate aim of the BJP, neither of the Hindutva force. From here, the right wing communal organizations want to move on to its original and fundamental objective. That is to re-establish the brahminical social order back on its track.

Another equally important fact that need to be highlighted with regard to the Ayodhya issue is that the betrayal of the nation, society and above all the people of India by both the ruling government as well as the right wing Hindutva force. L.K. Advani, Kalyan Singh and other BJP leaders had given solemn pledge to the nation, people of this country, the judiciary, the Parliament that they would maintain the status quo at the site of dispute. But they violated their own pledge and betrayed everyone. Moreover, in the disguise of pilgrims, the kar sevaks entered into the premise and indulged in vandalism and thus destroyed every fabric of this country. The Ram Bhakts turning into demolition squad did not bring any remorse in the Sangh Parivar nor in the BJP circle.

The Narasimha Rao government, on the other hand, remained a moot spectator. The only pretext that it had to defend itself was to keep reminding the nation and the people that kalyan Singh, the then

Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh had promised to safeguard the Masjid. The fundamental question that haunts everyone is that if the Rao government could sack Kalyan Singh's government and dissolve the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, why did it not take this course of action, when it was crystal clear that the Uttar Pradesh government is not going to abide its solemn promise.

In this entire scene of total destruction and despair, the efforts made by individuals, organizations, civil societies and concerned citizens going beyond the caste, class, religious background alone once again has maintained the Indian state and society from breaking into pieces. The entire mood was that of disbelief, which turned into rage towards those who masterminded, planned, and perpetrated this demolition of the core of Indian society. But ultimately, these sentiments turned into taking the reality seriously and addressing themselves to rectify the harm done and initiating the process of building once again a unified, plural, and democratic state and society.

RAM TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION

The Chronology leading to the destruction of the Mosque and events after that.

A four-and-a-half century chronology of events leading up to the Ayodhya flash point on 6 December 1992 is useful to put the controversy in historical perspective.

1528. A masjid is built by Mugal Emperor Babur in Ayodhya, a city whose name literally means a place of no wars, on a site Hindus claim was a temple marking good-king Lord Ram's birthplace.

1855.The first recorded riot over the Babri Masjid occurs in Ayodhya under the rule of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Oudh state. The three-day violence leaves 200 of Ayodhya's 2,000-strong population dead.

1859-60.Following the annexation of Oudh in 1856, the British effected a compromise.

Muslims are allowed to retain the Babri Masjid while Hindus are allowed to build a Ram Chabutra, or a canopied platform, just outside the masjid, by the side of its western gate. Muslims asked to use its northern gate for offering prayers.

1883. In May, Faizabad's Deputy Commissioner refuses permission to Hindus to construct a temple following objections from some Muslim leaders.

1885. A mahant, that is, a local priest files a case in the local court seeking permission to build a temple on the site of' the Ram Chabutra. Permission denied on the grounds that this was too close to the masjid and affect communal harmony.

1934. Widespread violence breaks out in Ayodhya. The masjid is damaged and hundreds of Muslim killed. The masjid falls into disuse, with only the occasional devotees on Fridays.

There is a Shia-Sunni dispute over the possession of the masjid. The court rules that it belongs to the Sunnis. This is the first and only court verdict on the title rights of the property.

March 1946: The Civil Judge of Faizabad gives evidence to show the Babri Masjid is used by both Shias and Sunnis.

22 December 1949, On the night of 21-22 December, idols of Lord Ram suddenly appear under the main canopy of the masjid. **According to the District Magistrate, J.N. Ugra these were 'surreptitiously and wrongly' placed inside by Hindu activists,** but the Hindus claim it is a miraculous manifestation of the Lord at his birthplace. In the wake of this new development, the masjid is locked up, but Hindus begin prayers at the site.

January 1950-April, 1955. A spate of court cases begins and a temporary injunction is issued restraining the disputing parties from removing the idols and interfering with religious ceremonies outside the sanctum sanctorum.

April 1961. The UP Sunni Religious Trust files a case for the masjid's possession. This is the first time that Muslims are able to muster sufficient courage to legally lay claim to the Babri-Masjid. In its wake, the trust's case becomes the leading dispute (title suit) and the other cases are clubbed together.

1980-5. The controversy, which was dormant is brought to life by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). The VHP organizes a countrywide campaign in which the demand for the 'liberation' of Ramjanmabhoomi is raised. In 1984, the *Shri Ramjanmabhoomi Mukti Yagna Samiti,* formed under the leadership of Mahant Avaidyanath, launched *the tala kholo* agitation.

25 January 1986. A local lawyer files a petition in a court in Ayodhya for unlocking the masjid on the ground that it was locked because of a threat to law and order in 1949, which no longer exists. The Ayodhya court refers the case to the Faizabad District Court.

1 February 1986. K. M. Pandey, the District and Sessions Judge, **after ascertaining the risk to law and order from the local administration, ordered the removal of the locks.** Neither the state government nor the central government reversed the decision. The same day the masjid is opened. Hindu devotees begin offering prayers. The Ramjanmabhoomi Trust demanded that the government transfer the property rights of Ayodhya site so that the biggest temple in the world could be built there. Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister at this time, a person who is supposed to have come from a secular background.

October 1986. Various Muslim organizations come together to form the Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC). Attitudes harden on both sides and rhetoric is increasingly militant. The title suit remains pending at the Faizabad Court.

January 1989. The VHP announces 9 November as the date for *shilanyas* (foundation stone laying ceremony) of the proposed Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

May 1989. The VHP announces a programme to raise a temple costing $8 million at the disputed site.

August 1989. Brick worship begins all over the country by the VHP for use in the temple

November 1989. The Allahabad Court rules that the *shilanyas* site is disputed and urges status quo. *Shilanyas,* however, takes place outside the Babri Masjid with the tacit approval of the Rajiv Gandhi government. This exercise takes place after- last-minute legal jugglery on what constitutes the disputed property. The Rajiv Gandhi government is defeated in the election, widely believed to be a Hindu backlash over his government's indecision.

21 January 1990. At the request of the Prime Minister V.P. Singh VHP postpones its construction plan four months. But L.K Advani began his Rath Yatra resulting in tension.

February 1990: The VHP defers any action for the next four months.

8 June 1990. The VHP announces 30 October for beginning the construction of the temple.

September 1990. B JP leader L.K Advani begins his famous Rathyatra (chariot procession) from Somnath to Ayodhya.

October 1990. On 30th, members of the Sangh Parivar stormed the mosque and planted a flag. Fifty people died in police firing. BJP threatens to withdraw support to V.P. Singh government if procession is stopped. The Union Government promulgates and then withdraws ordinance acquiring the disputed land. Advani is arrested at Samastipur in Bihar by Laloo Prasad Yadav, there is violence in Ayodhya and other places and BJP withdraws support to the government to its fall.

February 1991. Talks **between VHP and Babri Masjid Action Committee breakdown.**

October 1991. The new BJP government in Uttar Pradesh acquires about three acres of land at the disputed site. Allahabad restrains the acquisition and prohibits erection of structures. VHP activists posing as pilgrims, scale the Babri Masjid domes and hoist saffron flags and damage a portion of the outer wall.

November 1991: The Supreme Court directs the Uttar Pradesh Government to maintain status quo of structures located within acquired land.

8 February 1992. The UP government surreptitiously begins construction of boundary wall around the acquired land.

March 1992. Lal Das, a **neutral priest** of the Ramjanmabhumi, and three of his associates removed, and the government hands over 42 acres to a VHP trust.

23 June 1992. The Supreme Court asks UP government to stop digging around the masjid which it had begun in May. The UP government says it is helpless in preventing temple construction work. The Supreme Court admonishes it for its failure.

July –November talks resume between the VHP and the AIBMAC. Evidence is presented by both sides but no agreement is reached. Dharam Sansad announces that kar seva will begin on December 6 and refuses any further time for negotiated settlement.

November 1992. Talks between VHP and Babri Masjid Action Committee break down. L.K. Advani and Murali Manohar Joshi decide to travel from Varanasi and Mathura to Ayodhya as part of the kar seva campaign.

December 6 1992. **The belligerent BJP-VHP-RSS-BD activists storm the Masjid and demolish the three-doomed structure.**

Immediately after the demolition of the Mosque, the **Congress government promises to rebuild the mosque.**

27 November 1992 **announced its new package solution** consisting of an acquisition of the site and adjacent areas by a special status and reference on the historical status of the area. This was known as the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act 1993. This came in for constitutional questioning.

In February 1993, the Citizen's Tribunal on Ayodhya appointed a Commission of Inquiry which went into the entire event and highlighted the role played by the various government and non-government institutions in the destruction of the Masjid.

August 21 1993. The Sahamat announced that it is withdrawing the exhibition that it had planned to organize at Ayodhya. Because when Sahamat announced the holding of the exhibition, the police promptly lodged a FIR against Sahamat, its organizers, supporters and financers under various sections of IPC including 120 B for "conspiracy". Interestingly, **none of the Sangh Parivar leaders have been charged with "conspiracy".**

November 16 1993. Baba Lal Das, the former pujari of the Ram Janambhoomi temple and key witness in the CBI case against senior BJP and VHP leaders for their role in the demolition of the Babri-Masjid was murdered about 20 km away from Ayodhya.

January 1996 the VHP came up with its 40 point Hindu Agenda and its working president declared that their organization would extend support to any party, which incorporated majority of the issues raised in the agenda. Handing over of the Ayodhya site is one of the demands.

The Reality

The reality is that even when negotiations were going on between the VHP and the AIBMAC, the VHP made it clear that the "question" of handing over the site to the Muslims even if everything was proved in the latter's favour simply "did not arise". The BJP was not less strident: "Can any court in India order the idols to be removed? And, even if a court did, can any government implement that order?"

March 1999, at the *Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha* (national executive) of the RSS, Sudarshan among other issues once again highlighted the move to revive the Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura temple agitations, irrespective of NDA government's declared position on them.

Future Plans

January 2001 is the period planned for the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya, following on the Kumbh mela in Allahabad. This would be repeating the feet of 1989 when the VHP following at the heel of Kumbh Mela, trumped up religious parliament, the Dharma Sansad, when it decided and declared that no earthly power could thwart it in its divine mission of constructing a temple at Ayodhya.

[Source: Partha Ghosh. BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism. Delhi: Manohar. 1995, p 253. Ali Baquer, 'et al'. From the Press – The Ayodhya Story. New Delhi: Media Impact. Various other reports]

तुम आओ गुलशनें लहौर से चमन बरदोश
हम आए सुभे बनारस की रोशनी लेकर
हिमालय की हवाओं की ताजगी लेकर
फिर उसके बाद यह पूछना कि कौन दुश्मन है।

These sentiments of Ali Sardar Jaffri expresses the hopes and the aspirations of the common masses of this country who for centuries have lived in unity, harmony and with integrity irrespective of the cultural, social, religious differences. The need of the hour is to recapture the common sentiments, sensibilities and sensitivities of the toiling masses so that collective efforts can be made to expose the evil designs of every forms of communal and sectarian motives and to oppose them in all spheres of national and societal life. Taken together, the response to all forms of communal ideology and strife is to look for alternative forms of thinking, acting and interacting with the common masses of various religious backgrounds. In this regard, the alternatives have to be based on ideological principles and they also should be grounded on sound strategies. The basic thrust in our search for alternatives is not the emergence of communal forces but the urgency to maintain and sustain the collective identity, existence and integrity of our country and our society.

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Three things have helped the Hindutva in bringing about a unification of people belonging to the various communities into a unified ideological camp deeply engaged in renegotiating the notion of Hindu and this Hindu as the basis of the Indian Nation. First, from the very earliest the RSS shakhas have been able to draw into identical networks across the country. Secondly, the Hindutva camp also represents an ever-expanding section of the ruling classes. Earlier the merchants and traders and now the industrial capital is backing it up. Thirdly, with the rapid shift of the upper, privileged castes into the Hindutva camp, it has also established quite some hold over the gentry controlling big landed property.

Javed Alam

Chapter VIII

Alternative forms of Nation-Society building

The emergence of the brahminical communal nationalism, has posed grave challenge not only to the secular fabric of Indian society as claimed by many secular thinkers, but much deeper than this is that it has challenged the very foundations of Indian society. The Sangh Parivar has succeeded in projecting itself as the sole defender of the national unity, pride and integrity. But what in reality it has achieved is to provide an identity to a small section of middle class elements a sense of *Bharatiyaness* which in reality means Hinduness. In the last 40 years the Sangh Parivar has directed its attacks on the immediate 'enemy' the minority Muslim community. In the recent past it has committed atrocities on the Christians. This is the apparent agenda of the Hindutva force. Its real agenda is the continued subjugation, dehumanization and ostracization of the Dalits, Tribals, most backward castes and women from these sections.

As argued in chapter one, religious fundamentalism is a pan-world phenomenon. But the manner in which the Sangh Parivar is spreading its communal tentacles in India is a clear indication of the desperate search for re-establishing its hold over the social order. The upper caste Hindutva social system intrinsically abhors any revolt and protest. It has never tolerated any dissent and dissension. Hence, it always projects itself of being very tolerant. The Dalits and the downtrodden, who are on the other side of the spectrum, have devised their own 'everyday forms of resistance'. Wherever, the situation has been conducive for full pledged revolt and resistance, they have mobilized and organized the oppressed and the exploited to raise their banner of protest. It is these people's movements, whether fought under the banner of Dalit movements, Tribal movements, women's movements and backward caste movements that are sounding death-knell to the Sangh Parivar.

Any search for a viable and lasting alternative to counter the Hindutva force has to take all these aspects into consideration. It can not be an adhoc response, focusing on one domain where the Sangh has managed to establish its total hegemony. The alternative envisaged also need to take into account the nature, the objectives, the mobilizational abilities, the organizational structures and the game-plan involved and utilized in achieving the goal. But above all the alternatives have to be worked out from the perspective of the poor, the exploited, the Dalits, the Tribals, the most backward castes and the women form across these sections. In this regard the role of the secular citizens, intellectuals, conscious individuals and organizations, action groups, civil societies etc, become all the more crucial.

Alternatives to Hindutva at the Religious realm

The Brahminic Hinduism has been anti-people, anti-poor and anti-reform. Yet, from time to time various streams emerged in the Indian soil challenging the hegemony of the upper caste Hinduism. Rudi Heredia is of the opinion that there had been a long history of contestation between Brahminic Hinduism and Buddhism. Similar confrontation existed between upper caste Hinduism and Bhakti. Thus, the dominant hegemony, that is, that of the Brahminic Hinduism has not gone unchallenged, though it is still not deposed. Indeed it shows an uncanny capacity with its "Hindu method of absorption"[1] to contain and marginalise any alien influence or threat to its survival within a 'Hindu rate of growth'. Historically speaking, no dominant hegemony can be absolutely monolithic, for it can not completely suppress every group conflict or contain all antagonistic interest. Conflicts and cracks within the social order will continue to emerge and engage itself in discourse.[2]

The brahmanical social order has constantly succeeded in coopting some elements from the dissenting camp. But this is also a fact that brahminical Hinduism with its inherent absorbing nature can coopt only a small section from the subaltern communities. This is what it has done with Bangaru Lakshman of Andhra Pradesh who has now become the fifth President of BJP, and Sanjay Paswan of Bihar. Similarly, among the Tribals it has projected Babulal Marandi, a comparatively younger leader as the leader of the Tribals and even projecting him as the possible candidate for Chief Minister of the proposed Jharkhand. But under its game plan it will keep the vast majority as 'untouchable', as 'vanvasis' and keep them at bay. This would lead to revolt; though not in the same intensity and dynamism yet posing always a threat to the dominant brahmanical hegemony.

Within this broader socio-religious scenario, one needs to explore the possibility of Buddhism functioning as a revolutionary force. Dr. Ambedkar in his unfinished manuscript on 'Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India' presented a powerful critique to Brahminism. Ambedkar declares that 'though the Brahmins monopolized priesthood, yet they had fallen to the utmost depth of moral degradation. They earned their living by wrong means of livelihood. The Aryan community at the time Buddha was beginning his mission was steeped in the worst kind of debauchery: social, religious and spiritual. Drinking, gambling, they were renting their women to others for a time, allowing procreation by the best among them, beastality etc was highly prevalent among the Aryans'.[3]

Against this backdrop, Buddha appeared on the scene and tried to reform the evil systems. He carried out relentless struggles against three evil sources of Aryan religion: *vedas*, *yajna* and above all the caste system. The principle of inequality, which is the basis of the caste system, had become well established, though caste system itself had not been developed. Buddha did what the Aryan society refused to do. In the Aryan society the Shudra or low caste man could never become a Brahman. But Buddha not only preached against caste but also admitted the Shurdra and the low caste to the rank of a Bhikku who held the same rank in Buddhism as the Brahmin did in Brahminism, Budha, indeed heralded a revolution.[4] During the time of Buddha, Brahminism and in a special way the degradation within Brahminism was at its zenith. Buddha fought relentlessly against it. During the life of Ambdkar too Brahminism had sway over the society. Ambedkar in an intuitive manner exposes the historical discourse that has been going on between the degraded Brahminism and the revolutionary principles of Buddhism.

The Buddhist movement was revolutionary in its time. But it is depressing that this revolutionary movement has become counter productive and reformative in nature. It has also come under the spell of Brahminism and has engaged in rituals and has been influenced by caste stratification. Buddhism also failed to convert the cultural movement into socio-political and economic movements. There seems to be continuity with the Buddhist movement and the Dalit Literary movement. The Dalit Literature movement too stops short of political, social and economic issues. But this does not mean that the Buddhist movement does not have the potential for a revolutionary movement. Given its inherent power, Buddhism could offer an alternative to the ascending brahminical communal nationalism.

***Bhakti* Movement is an Alternative**

While the Brahminic Hinduism projected itself to be 'the great tradition', there arose the bhakti tradition which was the most popular form of religious expression of the masses. Bhakti tradition not only provided the religious platform for the ordinary citizens; it also functioned as a counter-pointer to Brahminism. Suvira Jaiswal argues that the origin of bhakti could be located in the egalitarian order of pre-vedic tribal society, before the transition to the class society.[5]

The devotional bhakti cults, which originated from the tenth century in south India, and flourished in central and northern India between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries provided one of the stringent criticism to Brahminism. The central point of challenge was the religious authority of Brahmins, the division of society into castes based on birth, and the elaboration of ritual, pilgrimages, and asceticism as a means of winning religious merit. The bhakti movement on the other hand was characterized by the abandonment of the self in devotion and love for a personal God, and by the depreciation of all man-made social and religious distinctions. The challenges posed by people like Ramanad, Nanak, Kabir, Jnaneshvar, Namadev, Ekanath, Tukaram continue to provide base for engaging in a search for an alternative to Hindutva.[6]

Sikhs protest against the RSS

On 27 April 2000, when K. Sudarshan, the Sarsanghchalak of RSS stepped into Chandigar's Sardar Sarv Hitkari School to inaugurate the national executive meet of the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat, an affiliate of the RSS, hundreds of Sikhs came into the street in protest. They shouted slogans like 'Sudarshan go back' and '*maans gau ka khayenge, Hindu nahin akhwahenge*', that is, 'We will eat beef; we do not want to be called Hindus'.[7] This protest march generated once again the debate, 'Are Sikhs Hindus? This day did not just end with the protest. About 19 social and political organizations met again and chalked out a plan to counter the 'evil designs' of the RSS. The Rashtriya Sikh Sangat in the line of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was formed in 1986 after the riot in which many Sikhs were the victims. Though few Sikhs are part of the Sangat, yet predominantly the community opposes this move by the RSS to bring the Sikhs through the back doors to brahminical Hinduism. The Sikh leaders are also aware of the fact that the game plan of the RSS is to control Sikh politics. In the name of the Sikh Sangat the RSS may even contest elections. This protest of the Sikh community also provides alternative forms of resisting the move of the RSS.

Women's Movement: An Alternative to Saffron Wave

Women's movements have become acutely aware of the manner the Hindutva force has managed to rally women around its communal ideology. Hence, women activists like Ratna Kapur and Brenda Cossman state that 'the question that we must at least begin to address is how we might counter these discursive strategies of the Hindu right. More specifically, we must consider how to reappropriate the discourses of secularism and equality from the communalists. As a first step, it is important that those who are opposed to the surge of the Hindu right and their communalist agenda enter the fray of this discursive struggle with a clear vision of secularism and equality. Our understanding of secularism and equality must be clearly and concisely articulated as an alternative to the meanings deployed by the Hindu right.[8]

The success of the Hindu right has been in its ability to popularise its versions of secularism and equality. Its vision of secularism as the formally equal treatment of all religions, with no special treatment for any group, is becoming part of the common sense of increasing numbers within the Hindu community. References to 'pseudo-secularism', 'appeasement of minorities', and 'no special rights' abound, even amongst those not convinced of or converted to Hindutva. Debates over the real meaning of secularism continue to rage not simply in intellectual circles, but in the popular media. The legal discourse of secularism and equality has become part of the popular consciousness. To counter the forces of Hindutva, our visions of secularism and equality must displace the versions of the Hindu right in the popular consciousness.

Women activists are also aware of the need not to be entraped by communal forces. We must be careful that our other political strategies do not inadvertently play into the communal hand. As feminists, for example, we need to adapt more complicated understandings of gender identity in our own strategies, and recognise the extent to which gender and community are mutually constituting. We cannot for example, afford to emphasise gender based discrimination situations, which may only serve to reinforce communal identities. Discrimination against Muslim women is only the most obvious example of how feminist issues can be, and have been, appropriated by the Hindu right. We must be able to negotiate our way through the complex web of interlocking discourses of gender, community and religion, through which women are constituted. Women's identity is never based on gender alone. Our strategies for addressing women's oppression must thus develop more complicated understandings of identity, which embrace these mutually constituting discourses.

Another challenge posed by the communal rights to the women's movement has opened avenues for debate about minority rights versus women's rights in the current political controversy over the Uniform Civil Code. The hardship and the suffering experienced by women of all communities – minority as well as majority- can not be swept under the carpet or glossed over with the rhetoric of freedom of religion. Nevertheless, the women's movement can not isolate itself from the political reality confronting the country. The women's organizations have realized that the political parties can no longer be rated simplistically as being pro or anti-women, alliance will have to be formed keeping in mind other parameters within the basic structure of the Constitution.[9]

People's Movements pose Alternatives

The anti-caste movement is one of the dominant alternatives to the ascent of the brahminical Hinduism. Among the anti-caste movements, the Self-Respect Movement, a social action group aimed at eradicating untouchability and caste also presents another alternative. This movement founded in 1920 by E.V.R. Periyar opposed brahminical tyranny. In a speech in 1957, Periyar asserted that according to the scriptures of Hinduism Brahmins are the upper castes and others are the lower castes. The Sastras attribute inferiority and superiority, disgrace and honour, to the low and the upper castes respectively. This disfavoured stratum was traditionally in hostility towards the established authorities.

Looking at the pan-Indian phenomenon, the various anti-caste movements were not merely a caste-reform movement but they were genuinely anti-caste movement. Reform elements like giving up drinking and meat eating, rejecting customs that marked them lower in the caste order were part of the movement. But beyond this, some element of cultural radicalism and the assertion of autonomy from 'caste Hindus' can be seen everywhere. Dr. Ambedkar spelt out this in the most powerful way. He had declared that the real method of breaking up the caste system was not to bring about inter-caste dinners and inter-caste marriages but to destroy the religious notions on which caste was founded. Ambedkar calls for total annihilation of caste system.[10]

Another Dalit leader Jagjivan Ram also called for a long drawn out struggle to eliminate the caste system and thus the brahminical system. 'The liberation struggles of the Scheduled Castes has begun. There are many hurdles and impediments on the way. The fight is unequal. But struggle we must without any respite and without a pause. We must liberate ourselves for in our liberation lies the emancipation of mankind'.[11] Those who are looking for alternative means of nation and society building need to proceed from the fact that the fight against Brahminism is unequal but irrespective of or due to this the struggle has to be waged. In spite of the innumerable and inhuman atrocities and massacres committed on them the Dalits have continued to wage a struggle against the brahminical hegemony.

The Dalit cultural movements all over India and in a special way in Maharashtra have opened floodgates for protest and revolt against the brahminical despotism. The Dalit literary movement in Maharashtra has helped the Dalits to carve out for themselves a culturally vibrant identity. It has also helped the Dalits to create and conserve critical energies against the dominant forces whose aim is to marginalize and humiliate the Dalits. To cite an example, the feudal exploitation of the Dalits found a militant expression in the oral tradition of *Powda* of the Mahars. The Dalits composed and sung songs in order to valorize the exemplary courage that one of the Dalit women showed in killing a landlord who considered it to be his feudal right to enjoy a first night with the Dalit bride.[12]

The Tribal movements also provide a powerful alternative to the emerging brahminical forces. A careful reading of history reveals this fact that the Tribals have always kept themselves away from the so-called mainstream society. This mainline society is nothing but the brahminical social system. Whether it is the Tribals of Rajasthan, Maharashtra or Jharkhand or the Tribals of the north-east, they have constantly risen in protest against the outside domination. These indigenous people have always fought for self-determination, freedom and Tribal self-rule. About the Jharkhand region, there are written records that state that the Mundas rose in revolt against the colonial rulers as early as 1797. When the upper castes had extended hospitality to the colonizers and benefited out of this servitude, the Tribals fought for nearly two centuries against the British rule. Even after independence, the Tribals have continued to fight against the imposition of brahminical rule through the Congress government first and now through the Vananchal by the brahminical communal forces. The introduction of the bill for the creation of a separate Jharkhand is a victory of this protracted struggle. But much more important and long-standing alternative is the Tribal Self-Rule, which does not allow interference of outside forces.

A song sung in a film on the Tribal life powerfully brings out the fact that the Tribals alone are the power and potent force that could counter the spread of the saffron wave in the Jharkhand region.

In my dreams today,
On the Dumbari Hills, asked Brother Birsa,
"How can your country survive?
You do something for that".
Birsa's answer was,
"Go to your village.
Mobilise the people.
And save your country."

[Source: Sarani, Jai Jharkhand, p 81]

After two hundred years of struggle, a separate Jharkhand state has become a reality. But our contention is that with the announcement of the creation of a separate Jharkhand the Jharkhand movement has not reached its objective. In fact, the struggle of the Tribals of Jharkhand for self-determination is beginning now only. There are over thirty Tribal groups within the Jharkhand region alone, Each of these Tribal communities presents a sense of sub-nationalism. But in the past, three fundamental factors contributed to the identity formation as Jharkhandis. Firstly, the fact of being a Tribal united all these Tribal groups. This provided a common platform for political awakening and action. Secondly, the fact of coming from the Jharkhand region also brought in a sense of being one unified group. Even those Tribals who have moved over to Assam tea gardens continued to maintain this sense of being a Jharkhandi. And finally, the ethnic sense of we being Tribals and they being 'Dikus' or the outsiders united the entire Tribal population for a protracted struggle. In this process, the Tribals had to establish dialogue with those backward caste groups, Dalits and the Muslims who have settled in some parts of the Jharkhand region for a long period of time. With the Jharkhand movement gaining ground, these non-Tribal groups too became part of the struggle.

With the announcement of a separate Jharkhand, these unifying factors themselves have come under duress. In the search for alternative forms of nation and society building, this change of socio-political climate in Jharkhand need to be paid attention to. While the Jharkhand movement was in progress, the sense of Tribals vs the outsiders provided enough fertile ground for identity formation among the Tribal groups. It was enemy outside that had to be fought then. But now, the cleavages that existed within the various sub-nationalism will be much more focused. The external enemy is waiting to exploit the emerging scenario for the ultimate exploitation of economic resources. Fissures have already appeared among the Tribal groups in focusing and highlighting their candidates to the post of chief minister. This way some of the leaders are playing into the hands of the fundamental forces who are waiting in the wings to take over the reigns of the new state and continue their hegemony. The Vananchal scheme of the Sangh Parivar is not out of the agenda of the saffron brigade. They are buying time to weaken the Tribal leadership, exploit the division that will emerge among the Tribal groups and finally impose their Vananchal agenda on the Jharkhand. It is this game plan of the Hindutva force that needs to be squarely looked at.

It is here the caution sounded by one of the powerful Tribal leaders Ram Dayal Munda needs to be explored. He argues that the Adivasis have contributed to the building up of the Great Indian Traditions. But at present the majority of the Adivasis are like a person sinking in a swamp and struggling hard with his hand and feet to get out, but his mind is not working out of nervousness and desperation.[13] Hence, there is an enormous need for awareness rising among the Tribals of Jharkhand both in terms of the dream coming in the form of a separate Jharkhand and the struggle that is unfolding in building a casteless-classless Jharkhand. To counter the various forces that are ready to devour this dream of the Tribals, Ram Dayal Munda calls for a coordinated effort to bring together the awakened groups of people. These coordination efforts will have to be accomplished at all levels, that is, ethnic, social, linguistic, religious, political, economic and gender. Unless this is systematically undertaken, the Jharkhand movement itself would whither away.

The northeast Tribals have also provided a scope for alternative in the form of a protracted struggle against the imposition of the monopoly of the Bharatiyaness. These warrior clans too fought against the British as early as 1832 and continue their struggle for autonomy and self-determination even now. This has led to total militarization of the region. Though this region was given special autonomy status under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution, yet they have always received step-motherly treatment. But much more alarming is the fact that the hindutva force has been steadily and systematically infiltrating in the area with its educational and other social development activities. Instead of understanding the special situation of the region, the brahminical forces have always branded the people of this region as 'separatists', 'terrorists', 'insurgents' etc and thus have created a big void between the people of the region and the people of the rest of India. Yet, the continued struggle of the people of northeast provides another alternative to counter the Hindutva force.

Today, attempts to confront the problem will have to incorporate a strategy, which encourages people to engage in mass action. Both the retaliatory violence among sections of Muslims, and Hindu communal aggressiveness has to be fought simultaneously and this can only be done by evolving counter-militant politics. A few other rumblings that are taking place need to be streamlined too. Given the economic squeeze and the consequent extraordinary hardship being caused to the people by the new economic liberalisation policies, the working classes and allied sections seem to be on the move. Likewise, the heavy cuts in the financial support to higher education, together with a clear perception among the youth of contraction in job opportunities, the urban young are also beginning to stir. In the rural areas the demand for redistribution of 'excess' land also is gaining momentum as also the struggle to end all kinds of discrimination against the Dalits and the Tribals.[14] Empowerment of the most disadvantaged group of India will continue to provide alternatives to the tyrannical Hindutva force.

The Radical Peasant Movements or what is usually called the Naxalite Movements also offer alternative forms of social restructuring. The naxalite movements for the first time established that the exploited Indian masses and toiling classes are capable of taking to armed struggles. The earlier perception was that the oppressed and marginalised section of the society could never opt for a militant struggle. But the Naxalbari struggle proved this perception of the ruling class wrong. In 1967, the rural, illiterate and toiling masses *en masse* rose against the oppression of the *jotdars* of Naxalbari. This spark spread to other regions of India and the Naxalite movement is going on for more than three decades unabated. For the first time the working class and the landless peasants realized the fact that they can oppose and revolt against the tyrannical behaviour of the landed gentry.

In a state like Bihar, which is usually known for its backwardness, corruption, caste wars and massacres the toiling masses have risen in strength and power to oppose the upper caste landlords' atrocities. The social contradictions of Bihar have given rise to the skewed social structure. Since the agrarian crisis is sharpening, the conventional caste relationships are being assiduously assailed by the younger generation. The Dalits and the downtrodden are asserting themselves and are saying "no" to oppression and exploitation. This is becoming the fundamental component of Dalit identity.[15] These assertions are uniting the Dalits and the downtrodden and are also posing a threat to the brahminical social order. The need of the hour is to identify these assertions and align other forces too so that a comprehensive and conclusive struggle could be wage against the Hindutva force.

Oppose Saffronisation of Culture

Another area where serious thought has to be given is education. In the light of the advance made by communal forces in the field of education and the ongoing efforts of the BJP governments, the need for secular initiatives to preserve and advance the secular, democratic education assumes certain immediacy. An urgent necessary step is to intensify the struggle for democratisation, which would take into account both the impact of communalisation and globalisation in the field of education. The steps recently taken in Kerala to defend secular education is a good beginning which could be expanded into an all India movement in order to set up secular education committees in all institutions to act as monitoring cells. The initiative in this direction rests with progressive teachers and students organisations.[16]

Alternatives at the Economic Domain

The Hindutva force is equally agitated by its loss of control over economic resources. It is a pan-Indian phenomenon that the backward castes and the middle classes have replaced the upper castes in traditional economic sectors like land ownership, transport, business and lower level government and non-government employments. This has sent shock wave to the brahminical world. Hence, it is trying to regroup resources through control over market as spelt out in the New Economic Policy and the liberalization processes. This move of the Sangh has to be countered with a long-term strategy. In the past it was wrongly perceived that these are faceless forces. But now the picture is clear that the imperialist forces and the fundamentalist reactionary forces have aligned together to appropriate more wealth in the name of restructuring the economy of the country.

One of the dominant areas where an alternative needs to be seriously searched is the myth of economic crisis. One should begin with an informed analysis of the main dimensions of the crisis as well as the force that are behind the political economy of the country. If globalization and liberalization has reduced poverty and increased economic well-being of all the citizens, then this has to be examined taking into account the ground reality. On the other hand if poverty has increased and multiplied due to globalization, privatization and liberalization then the masses are to be enabled to resist these forces. The masses are to be made aware of the fact that it is not lack of Structural Adjustment Programmes that generated the current crisis. The real structures that created the present crisis are unequal distribution of resources, faulty production, and hierarchical social structure.

Today it has become necessary that we need to counter the middle class myth that globalization has come to stay and it is the inevitable process after capitalism and hence, there is no point in going against it. This type of reasoning is detrimental to the entire human efforts to counter the forces that are working against the very human existence. We also need to redefine the foundational principles and practices that underline the alternatives. While we out-rightly decry the market model of economy, we need to search for local and sustainable model of sustenance and development. Local forms of development can be ensured only if people's participation is obtained. Here the role of the socio-political activists to ensure people's power to say 'no' to the oppressive measures and mechanisms becomes very crucial. The power of the people, especially the downtrodden masses to oppose every form of evil projects of any powers is systematically being eroded. And the Sangh Parivar does this in the most subtle form. Finally, initiating local governments like Tribal Self-Rule, Panchayati Raj systems and Women's organizations to identify resources, to mobilize resources and to manage resources is one of the powerful modes of providing an alternative to the Hindutva force.

Political Alternatives

In terms of alternatives we should also reiterate the sentiments expressed by the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan on the eve of the 53rd anniversary of Independence.

- Rewrite laws to pave the way for deterrent punishment for crimes against women.
- Decentralise financial and administrative powers to panchayats to strengthen democracy at the grassroots.
- Assert authority and primacy over daredevil heroes of crime and banditry.
- Initiate literacy campaigns for the emancipation of women, especially through NGOs and other voluntary groups.
- Speak against crimes and violence at every social and political level.
- Put an end to intolerance and violence towards the minority communities.
- Give serious thought to problems such as poverty, ignorance, disease and superstition notwithstanding an impressive catalogue of national achievements.[17]

In the last few years, President K.R.Narayanan has played his role as the 'Conscience Keeper of the Nation". The Prime Minister Mr. A.B.Vajpayee from the historical red fort focussed on security and development. But the President dealt with both the internal and external security. He once again made it clear that the common men and women had 'yet to taste the fruits of Independence'. Thus the President has forcefully identified the alternative forms of state and nation building. He asserted that, ' It is indeed a tribute to our democracy that people are now mobilising themselves to protect their rights and to realise their basic needs and change their living conditions. After all, democracy is a method of enlisting people's participation. However deprived and distressed, our people have shown remarkable initiative to participate in civil society to fight against social evils, poverty, corruption, environmental degradation and a host of other ills gravely affecting their daily lives'.[18]

Further, every attempt to develop alternatives to the brahminical communalism it is imperative that we take into consideration the entire social scenario. It is not just the resurgence of communal forces, nor the atrocities on the minorities, tampering with the educational systems, but every move of the Hindutva force needs to be ascertained. This alone will enable those who are searching for a viable and lasting alternative to address the issue squarely. Moreover, in this search one should not throw the baby with the bath water. It is not the entire Hindu community that is engaged in communalization of politics. Neither is all the Hindus engaged in the game of 'majority' and 'minority' or 'we' and 'they' etc. Similarly, within the Brahmin caste the majority of the population is against the brahminical communal nationalism. Moreover the common person who is engaged in earning his living is not preoccupied with the communal forces.

As Panikkar suggests, in evolving alternative methods of struggle it would be useful to make a distinction between the communally convinced and the communally mobilised. All those who now support communalism are not hardcore communalists. Many of them do not share the belief in the political goal of Hindu Rashtra or even the coercive methods of Hindutva. They positively disapprove of riots and killing of fellow citizens. Yet, they share the cultural assumptions of communal arguments and propaganda. The communally mobilised are fast becoming communally convinced, given the relentless communal endeavour to transform their consciousness.

In the search for alternatives one need to explore the everyday forms of resistance that are regularly evolved by the common masses. In every oppressive and inhuman situations the downtrodden have worked out indigenous methods to counter the reactionary forces. When the ban on cow slaughter was debated in the Parliament, a group of people in Kerala killed a cow and fed the public freely to highlight the game plans of the then Jana Sangh which was making all out attempts to make a non-issue a national issue. These forms of spontaneous and dexterous forms of everyday protest are to be employed to counter the right wing communal forces.

Another important and potent area that needs to be explored is that various communities, groups and conscious citizens need to come together to explore the possibility of initiating various research projects that would go into the historical roots of fundamentalism, various shades of fundamentalism, the real contours and the contexts of nation building, and the alternative form of nation-society building. This has to be multi-disciplined, multi-pronged, and long standing. These efforts will enable in countering every forms of fundamentalism.

Here, it is also imperative to expose to the masses that the Sangh Parivar as a brahminical organization, can not build this nation as a globally civilized nation because it has no agenda for human equality. Its agenda of Hindu unity does not address the question of human equality.[19] Hence, their trumpeting from the house tops that they are the champions of the 'Hindu cause' or that they are the best bet for nation building is only a camouflage for executing their game plan. It is this that needs to be exposed and exploded. As stated above, the Sangh has both hidden and open agenda close to its chest. It is this modus operandi of the Hindutva force that need to be paid very close attention to in the search for alternatives. The Indian tradition is full of inspiration and intuition that the evil designs of the powerful anti-human and anti-societal forces come to a disgraceful end once its pot is full of evil designs. The perceptive words of an Urdu poet, Javed Akhtar express it much more powerfully:

> लोग इन मुर्दा खुदाओं के सहारे क्यों हैं?
> जिक्र में जंग है क्यों, जुबान पे ताले क्यों हैं?
> रोज उठता है तेरे हाथ दुआ के खातिर
> है खुदा कोई तो इस हाथ में छाली क्यों हैं?
>
> **जावेद अख्तर**

[Liberal Translation: The people are running after the dead gods. Their conversation is only about riots and conflicts. But they engage in regular prayers and worships but their intentions are evil.]

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Appendix 1
Role of RSS

Political Actor	Source of Pressure Group/Aggregation of Public Opinion	A Religious and Interest Group	Agent for Social Services
1. Participation in freedom movement (This claim has been challenged by others	Formation of Bharat Mazdoo Sabha, Bharat Kisan Sabha Rashtriya Sevika Samithi ABVP. etc.	Vishwa Hindu Parishad Vishal Hindu Sammelan Virat Hindu Samaj	Support to government During wars, relief activities in communal riots during Partition, Assam earth-quake,
2. Formation of Jana Sangh	And Publishing Houses,	Hindu Samajostav Hindu Front	Punjab Floor Andhra Cyclone, Morvi
3. Participation in Goa Liberation Movement	Dailies, Weeklies and Periodicals.	Hindu March Hindu Jagran Vedika	disaster, Bhopal Gas Tragedy, support to Sikhs during 1984 riots in Delhi etc. and
4. Participation in JP Movement			Vana Vasi Kalyan Ashram Vidya Niketan, Seva Bharti Vivekananda Kenra
5. Anti-Emergency activities (1957-77			Deen Dayal Research Institute etc.
6. Formation of BJP			

(K. Jayaprasad, RSS and Hindu Nationalism. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1991, p.82

Appendix II

RSS: A Pressure Group and an Agency for the Creation of Public Opinion

Pressure Groups				Creation of Public Opinion			
Agrarian	**Labour**	**Student**	**Women**	**Press**			**Publishing Houses***
				Dailies	Weeklies	Periodicals	
Bharthiya Kisan Sangh	Bharthiya Mazdoor Sangh	Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad	Rashtriya Sevika Samithi	Swadesh (Hindi)	Organiser (English)	Sangha Sandesh (Hindi)	Rashtra Dharma Prakashan (Lucknow)
				Yugadhara (Hindi)	Kesari (Malayalam)	Tarun Deep (Hindi Mon.)	Rashtrothana Sahitya (Bangalore)
				Vir Arjun (Hindi)	Swastik (Bengali)	Pragathi (Mal. Quart.)	Suruchi Sahitya (Delhi)

Tharun Bharath (Marathi	Jagruthi (Telugu)	Vrithantham (Mal)	The Baba Saheb Apte Smarak Samithi (Nagpur)
Janma Bhoomi (Mal)	Vivek (Marathi)	Jagrit (Eng.)	Gnana Ganga Prakashan (Jaipur)
	Alok (Assam)	Ekatha (Marathi Mon.)	Bharatiya Vichar Sadhana (Nagpur & Pune)
Mother-Land (English)	Vivek (Kannada)	Janhvi (Hindi Mon)	Kurukshetra Publications (Cochin)
	Vikram (Kannada)	Rashtra Dharma (Hindi Mon.)	
	Hindu (Kannada)		
	Panchajanya (Hindi)		
	Sadhana (Tamil)		

* All thee are All India Publishing Houses

(K. Jayaprasad, RSS and Hindu Nationalism. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1991. p. 88)

The Data presented here are upto early 1990s

Appendix III

The Constitution of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*

Preamble

Whereas in the disintegrated conditions of the country it was considered necessary to have an Organisation.

(a) To eradicate the fissiparous tendencies arising from diversities of sect, faith, caste and creed and from political, economic, linguistic and provincial differences amongst Hindus;

(b) To make them realise the greatness of their past;

(c) To inculcate in them a spirit of service, sacrifice and selfless devotion to the Hindu Samaj as a whole;

(d) To build up an organised and well-disciplined corporate life; and

(e) To bring about an all-round regeneration of the Hindu Samaj;

AND WHEREAS the Organisation known as "THE RASIITRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH" was started on the Vijaya Dashmi Day in the year 1982 Vikram Samvat (1925 AD) by the late Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.

AND WHEREAS Sri Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar was nominated by the said Dr. Hedgewar to succeed him in the year 1997 Vikram Samvat (1940 AD).

AND WHEREAS the Sangh had till now no written constitution;

AND WHEREAS in the present changed conditions, it is deemed expedient to reduce to writing the constitution as also the aims and objects of the Sangh and its method of work;

THE RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH hereby adopts the following Constitution:

THE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Name

Article I: The name of the Organisation is "THE RASTITRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH".

Head Office

Article 2: The Head Office of the Sangh is at Nagpur.

Aims and Objects

Article 3: The aims and objects of the Sangh are to weld together the diverse groups within the Hindu Samaj and to revitalise and rejuvenate the same on the basis of its Dharma and Sanskriti, that it may achieve an all-sided development of the Bharatwarsha.

Policy

Article 4: (a) The Sangh believes in orderly evolution of the society and adheres to peaceful and legitimate means for the realisation of its ideals.

(b) In consonance with the cultural heritage of the Hindu Samaj, the Sangh has abiding faith in the fundamental principle of tolerance towards all faiths. The Sangh as such, has no politics and is devoted to purely cultural work. The individual swayamsevaks, however, may join any political party, except such parties which believe in or resort to violent and secret methods to achieve their ends; persons owing allegiance to such parties or believing in such methods shall have no place in the Sangh.

Flag

Article 5: While recognising the duty of every citizen to be 16yal to and to respect the state flag, the Sangh has as its flag, the Bhagwa Dhwaj--the age-old symbol of Hindu culture.

Swayamsevakas

Article 6: (1) (a) Any male Hindu of 18 years or more, who subscribes to the Rules and Regulations of the Sangh and takes its pledge, set out in Appendix A, may be registered as Swayamsevak.

(b) A Swayamsevak shall be deemed to be an Active Swayarnsevak, if he attends a Sangh shakha regularly or performs specific Sangh work duly assigned to him.

(c) A Swayamsevak shall cease to be a Swayamsevak, if he resigns his membership or is expelled for misconduct or indiscipline or any act prejudicial to the interests of the Sangh.

(2) Bal Swayamsevakas: Any male Hindu below 18 may be admitted and allowed to participate in the Sangh programmes. They will be classified according to the given suitable training in accordance with the Rules framed for the purpose.

A list of the Bal Swayamsevakas will be maintained in the units to which they are admitted.

Register of Swayamsevaks

Article 7: (a) Each Village, town, city and the provincial centre having a Shakha shall constitute a primary unit of the Sangh.

(b) Every Shakha shall maintain a register of all its Swayamsevaks-active or otherwise.

Article 8: (a) For organisational purposes, the country shall be divided into provinces.

(b) Every province may be further sub-divided according to their order of subordination as indicated below.

PROVINCE (Prant)

Divisions (Vibhag)
Districts (Zila)
Cities (Nagar)
Provincial centres (Prantya Kendras)
(Places with a population
of 1,00,000 and over)

Tehsil

Towns (Shakhas) (places having
a population of 5,000 and over)

Mandal (Group of Villages)
(Gram)
Villages (place below 5,000
population)

Elections

Article 9: (a) Elections shall be held after every three years,

(b) The date, method and venue of election shall be determined by the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal.

Qualification for Voters and Candidates for Selection and Appointment

Article 10: (a) Voters: Every active Swayamsevak of at least one year's standing immediately prior to the date of preparation of the Electoral lists for the elections, shall be entitled to vote in the elections.

(b) Candidates: (1) He (i.e., a Swayamsevak) who is an office-bearer of a political party, shall not be eligible as a candidate for election or as an appointee to any post so long as he is such an office-bearer.

(2) A candidate for election or an appointee to any Akhil Bharatiya Post, shall be,

(a) An active Swayamsevak of at least six years continuous standing; and

(b) Shall work full time without any remuneration.

(3) An appointee to a provincial post shall be an Active Swayamsevak of at least three years continuous standing.

(4) A candidate or appointee for Sanghachalakship shall be an Active Swayamsevak of at least one year's standing.

Order of Authorities and Bodies

Article 11: There shall be the following authorities and bodies constituted as provided in the Article shown against their names: -

I.	Sarsanghachalak	Article 12
2.	Sarkaryavaha	Article 13
3.	Kendriya Karyakari Mandal	Article 14
4.	Akhil Bharatiya Prathinidhi Sabha	Article 15
5.	Prant, Vibhag, Zila, etc. Sanghachalaks	Article 16

6.	Pracharaks	Article 17
7.	Prantiya, Vibliag, Jila, etc. Karyakari Mandals	Article 18
8.	Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha	Article 19

Sarsanghachalak

Article 12: Late Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, the founder of the Sangh, was the Adya (First) Sarsanghachalak. Sir Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar was nominated Sarsanghchalak by him in consultation with the then Kendriya Karyakari Mandal. He is the Sarsanghachalak since then. The Sarsanghchalak will nominate his successor, as and when the necessity arises, with the consent of the then Kendriya Karyakari Manda. The Sarsanghachalak is the guide and philosopher of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. He may attend, summon or address any assembly of the Swayamsevaks, Pratinidhi and Karyakari Mandals severally or jointly.

Sarkaryavaha

Article 13: (a) The elected members of the Akhil Bharatiya Prathinidhi Sabha (vide Article 15) shall elect the Sarkaryavaha.

Kendriya Karyakari Mandal

Article 14: (a) The Sarkaryavaha shall form the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal. The Mandal shall consist of the following office-bearers

(1) Sarkaryavaha (he will preside).
(2) One or more Sah-Sarkaryavahas.
(3) Akhil Bharatiya Sharirik Shikshan Pramukh.
(4) Akhil Bharatiya Bauddhik Shikshan Pramukh.
(5) Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh.
(6) Akhil Bharatiya Nidhi Pramukh.

(b) The Kendriya Karyakari Mandal shall have in addition not less than five members who shall be chosen from among the Karyakari Mandals of the provinces.

(c) Functions: The following will be the functions of the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal:

(1) The KKM is the highest executive Sangh and as such will carry into effect the policy and programme laid down by the ABP. The KMM shall supervise the working of the units.

(2) The KKM shall control the finances of the Sangh. It may take from the several provincial units such amounts of money, as may from time to time be required for the general advancement of the Sangh work. The KKM may finance such of the units as have insufficient funds of their own.

(3) The KKM shall appoint one or more auditors to audit the accounts of the Sangh annually.

(4) The Kendriya Karyakiri Mandal may shift the Head Office to or establish one or more sub-Head Offices at places wherever it may deem proper.

(5) The KKM, in consultation with the Prantiya Karyakari Mandals concerned, may redistribute the provinces.

(6) The KKM shall be the highest authority for taking such disciplinary Section against any Swayamsevak as may be necessary.

(7) The KKM will frame rules and buy-laws, in consonance with the constitution, for the purpose of uniformity in rules and procedure and for the proper functioning of the Sangh.

Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha

Article 15: (a) The elected member of a Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha shall elect from amongst themselves one-eighth of their number as representatives of the Province on the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha.

(b) Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha shall consist of:

Representatives of the delegates.

Sanghachalaks and pracharaks of divisions, Province and Provincial Centres.

3. Members of the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal.

(c) The Sarkaryavaha shall preside over the ABPS.

(d) The ABPS shall meet at least once a year.

(e) The ABPS shall review the work and lay down the policy and programmes of the Sangh.

Sanghachalaks

Article 16: (a) Every province, provincial centre, division, district, tehsil, city, town may have, a

Sanghachalak,

(b) The Prant Sanghachalak shall be elected by delegates elected as per Article 19(a).

(c) The Sanghachalaks for the constituent units in the province shall be annually appointed by the Prant Sanghchalak in consultation with the Prant Pracharak.

(d) In case of suitable person is not available for the office of Sanghchalak, the Prant Sanghchalak may appoint a Karyavaha. The Karyavaha so appointed shall perform the duties of a Sanghachalak.

(e) In case of death, departure, prolonged illness or resignation of the Prant Sanghachalak the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal still appoint a person to discharge the duties of the Prant Sanghachalak.

Pracharaks

Article 17: (a) (I) Pracharaks shall be full-time workers selected from amongst most devoted workers of high integrity, whose mission is to serve the society through the Sangh who, of their own free will, dedicate themselves to the cause.

(ii) They will receive no remuneration.

(b) Appointment of Pracharaks.

The Akhil Bharatiya Pracharak Pramukh will appoint Prant Pracharaks with the consent of the Sarkaryavaha and in consultation with the Sanghchalaks concerned.

The Prant Pracharak will appoint, transfer or discontinuance of the services of the Pracharaks shall vest in the Sarkaryavaha.

(c) The ultimate authority for the appointment, transfer or discontinuance of the services of the Pracharakas shall vest in the Sarkaryavaha.

Prantiya and Subordinate Karyakari Mandals

Article 18: (a) Sanghachalak of a province, provincial centre, division, district, tehsil, city or town will form a Karyakari Mandal consisting of the following office-bearers.

(1) The Sanghachalak (he will preside).
(2) Pracharak [Appointed under Article 17 (b)]
(3) Karyavaha.
(4) Baudhik Shikshan Pramukh.
(5) Sharirik Shikshan Pramukh.
(6) Nidhi Pramukh.

(b) Each Karyakari Mandal shall also have in addition not less than three members chosen from amongst the Karyakari Mandals of the subordinate units, if any.

(c) Karyakari Mandals will be the highest executive authorities in their respective units, responsible to the immediately superior Karyakari Mandal for implementing the policy and carrying out the programme laid down by the ABP Sabha. They shall supervise the Sangh work in their respective units and control the finance.

(d) Karyakari Mandals will have the power to take disciplinary action against any individual Swayamsevak for breach of discipline or behaviour prejudicial to the interests and honour of the Sangh. Such an action is subject to confirmation by the Karyakari Mandal of the superior units.

(e) The PKM with sanction of the KKM may change the provincial centre.

(f) The Prantiya Karyakari Mandal may, if necessary, reconstitute the various units in the province.

(g) The Prantiya Karyakari Mandal may frame rules in consonance with the constitution, and the rules framed by the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal for the proper functioning of the Sangh in their province.

(h) For Mandals and places with a population of less than 5,000 a Karyavaha will be appointed by the Sanghachalak of the superior unit. He will be responsible for the Sangh work in his unit.

Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha

Article 19:

(a) Districts, cities and the Provincial Centre will send for every fifty Swayamsevakas entitled to vote one such Swayamsevak as Delegate to the Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha.

(b) The Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha consists of

(i) the elected delegates,

(ii) Sanghachalak and Pracharaks of Divisions, Districts, Cities and of the Provincial Centre.

(iii) Members of the Prantiya Karyakari Mandal.

(c) The Prantiya Sanghachalak will preside over the Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha.

(d) The Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha shall meet at least once a year.

(e) The Prantiya Pratinidhi Sabha shall review the work in the province and make such recommendations to the PKM as it may deem fit.

Programmes

Article 20: The existing branches of the Sangh will continue to the provisions of the constitution.

New branches may be opened.

Physical training will be given by means of exercises and games organised at a convenient hour every day.

Occasional talks and lectures will be arranged for imparting intellectual training and inculcating love ideals of Hindu Dharma and culture.

Periodical classes for Swayamsevakas to be trained as instructors and workers will be arranged.

Festivals of cultural importance will be celebrated and members of the public may be invited on such occasions.

Agencies and institutions may be established to disseminate knowledge of the ideals and activities of the Sangh and to educate the people generally.

In general, the Sangh may do all such things and carry on any other work capable of being undertaken in connection with and calculated, directly or indirectly, to promote and achieve any of the objects mentioned in Article 3.

Meetings, Conferences, Rallies and Training Classes

Article 21: (a) All Karyakari Mandals will meet as often as necessary, but at least once in the period shown below against each.

KKM	Four months
PKM	Four months
VKM	Three months
JKM	Three months
Teh. KM	Two months
Other KMs	One month

(b) The workers or Swayamsevakas of any unit or of two or more coordinate units may have combined programmes and meet together in conferences, rallies or training classes with the previous permission of the proper authorities of the superior unit.

(c) The KKM may arrange Akhil Bharatiya Conferences and rallies of workers and Swayamsevakas.

(d) The KKM shall organise training classes called Adhikari Shikshan Varga at different places in the country to impart training in the Sangh work. Swayamsevakas thus trained in the presented three years' course will be Qualified Instructors.

Funds

Article 22: (a) All offerings, gifts, donations, etc., received for Sangh purposes by the branches shall constitute the Sangh Funds.

(b) On the Vyas Poornima function of every year or any other sacred day fixed for the purpose, every branch will celebrate the Dakshina Day and will receive voluntary offerings.

(c) The funds received by village branch will remain with the Karyavaha of that branch. The Tehsil Nidhi Pramukh will supervise the management of funds of all branches within the Tehsil.

(d) The KKM and PKM shall issue such directions for the disbursement of the funds collected by its subordinate units, as it may from time to time think necessary for the general advancement of the Sangh work.

Quorum

Article 23: One-half of the total strength shall form the Quorum for the meetings of the various Karyakari Mandals, and one-fifth for the Prantiya and Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabhas.

Undeveloped Units

Article 24: (a) In case of Provinces in which the work has not yet developed to an appreciable level, elections shall not be held, and the Prant Pracharak appointed shall be in sole charge of the work.

(b) The province shall be deemed to be developed when the number of Active Swayamsevakas reaches one thousand in that province, provided the KKM is satisfied with the general progress of the work in that province.

The KKM, however, may provide to such provinces due representation on the Akhil Bharatiya Prathinidhi Sabha in a manner it seems fit.

Interpretation and Amendment of the Constitution

Article 25: (a) The interpretation of the constitution and its clauses by the Kendriya Karyakari Mandal shall be final

(b) An amendment to the constitution can be proposed to the KKM by any PKM or by any other Karyakari Mandal with the recommendation of the respective PKM, or by a body of any twenty-five members of the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha. The KKM will put the proposal of such an amendment before the PKM and the amendment will be deemed carried if two-thirds of the provinces agree by a simple majority.

(c) The decisions of the PKMs over such amendments may be brought for reconsideration before the ABP Sabha on a requisition by any twenty-five members of that Sabha. The decision of the ABP Sabha, taken by two-thirds majority, shall be final.

RSS PLEDGE

In the name of God and my ancestors, I hereby become a member of the RSS for the all round progress of Bharat Varsha by strengthening the holy Hindu Dharma, Hindu Sanskriti and Hindu samaj. I shall do Sangha work with all my heart to the best of my ability and I shall be bound by this oath for the whole of my life.

Bharat Mata Ki Jai !

Appendix IV

RSS ORGANISATIONAL CHART

I. Sarsanghachalak.

II. Kendriya Karyakari Mandal (Central Working Committee).

A. General Secretary.

1. Assistant General Secretary

B. Karyalaya Pramukh (Office Secretary) -- responsible for correspondence and expenditure of funds.

C. Zonal Joint secretaries.

D. Programme chairmen.

1. Prachar Pramukh-responsible for recruitment and placement of Pracharaks.

2. Shararik Shikshan-arranges Physical exercises at Shakha and camps.

3. Boudhik Pramukh-determines songs to learn, books to be read, topics at shakha and baudhik.

4. Nidhi Pramukh-arranges for collection of funds at Guru Dakshina*.

5. Vyavastha Pramukh--co-ordinator of activities.

III. Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (All-India Representative Assembly). This meets once a month in Nagpur. Resolutions are discussed and voted by the Sabha. Members are elected by Swavamsevakas over 18.

IV. Kshetra (Zone)

Pracharak

V. Prant (State)
   A. Sanghchalak
   B. Karyavah
   C. Pracharak
   D. Committee
   E. Pratinidhi Sabha

VI. Vibhag (Division)
   A. Sanghchalak
   B. Karyavah
   C. Pracharak
   D. Committee

VII. Zila (District)
   A. Sanghchalak
   B. Karyavah
   C. Pracharak
   D. Committee

VIII. Nagar (City)

- **A. Sanghchalak**
- **B. Karyavah**
- **C. Pracharak**
- **D. Committee**

IX. Mandal (Neighbourhood)

- **A 'Karyavah**
- **B. Committee**

Shakha

- **A. Karyavah**
- **B. Mukhva Shikshak**
- **C. Shikshak**
- **D. Gatanayak**

XI. Prachar Vibhak. This is the recent addition to the RSS, formed in the month of August 2000. The need to form a publicity department within RSS was felt as stated by the RSS leaders 'to remove misunderstandings about the RSS'.

Subsequent to a decision to tax gurudakshina (donation) the RSS constitution was amended to redefine the role of Nidhi Pramukh. Shakha themselves were vested with individual responsibility in collecting donations to enable the RSS to operate with limits of tax exemption.

[Source: W.K. Anderson and S. D. Damle. The Brotherhood in Saffron: the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism. New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 1987, p 257.]

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Appendix V

RSS INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY

TAMIL NADU

1. Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Kanyakumari
2. Swami Vivekananda Education Society, Chennai.

KERALA

3. Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission, Muzol in Vayanad.

KARNATAKA

4. Hindu Seva Prathisdm Rashtrothan Parishad, lanaseva Vidya Kendra, Chaannenahatti, Bangalore.
5. Ashvini Hospital, Madikeri.
6. Gangannna Chikkumbi Muth Bal Kalyan Kendra, Belgaum.

GOA

7. Matru Chava, Dhavali, Phonda (Kavale)

ANDHRA PRADESH

8. Saraswati Vidyapeetham, Bandalguda, Hyderabad.
9. Deen Dayal Purarm Nagayalanka, Vijayawada.

WESTBENGAL

10. Khoribari Kendra, Khoribara, Darjeeling.
11. Sri Aravind Chatravas, Gopali, Midnapur.
12. Kalyan Ashram Chatravas, Bagmundi, Purutia

ORISSA

13. Rishikul Residential Sanskrit School, Dumbermail, Sambalpur.
14. Sankaracharya Sanskrit Kanyashram, Jalmpeta, Phulbam.

BIHAR

15. Birsa Seva Sadan, Lohardaga.
16. Sandeepani Ashram, Dhurva, Ranchi.
17. Vidyalaya Chatravas, Barkhatsena, Pancharan West.

UTTAR PRADESH

18. Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Vidya Mandir and Chatravas, Gorakhpur.
19. Shri Ram Vanavasi Chatravas, Gorakhpur.
20. Chhatravas, Chikitsalay, Vidya Mandir, Ghorwal, Sonabhadra.
21. Gramoday Prakalp, Jayaprabhagram, Gonda.
22. Birsa Munda Chatravas, Kanpur.
23. Deen Dayal Dham,

24. Seva Kendra, Agra.
25. Shiv Gopal Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Halwani, Nainital.
26. Upper Bhagirathi Ghati Vikas Samiti, Maneri, Uttarkashi.

DELHI

27. Seva Bharati Seva Prakalp.

HARYANA

28. Seva Bharati Seva Prakalp, Madhav Kunj Vijaynagar, Rohtak.
29. Vanavasi Chatravas, Bhivani.

PUNJAB

30. Peedit Seva Prakalp Samiti, Amritsar.
31. Seva Dham, Chandigarh.
32. Nirogi Bal Ashram, Kotakpura, Faridkot.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

33. Himagiri Kalyan Ashram, Shilli, Solan
34. Kanya Chhatravas, Sangla, Kinnor

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

35. Veda Mandir Bal Niketan, Ambaphala, Jammu
36. Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission, Ambaphala
37. J&K Sahayata Sairuti, Jammu Geeta Bhavan. Rajasthan
38. Keshav Vidya Peeth, Jamoli, near Jaipur
39. Sri Ram Ashram, Gri Ram Vidyalaya, Mohakampura, Baswada
40. Vanavasi Chatravas and Vidyalaya, Kotla
41. Kshaya Nivaran pariyojana, Jaipur.

GUJARAT

42. Kanya Chatralay, Ukai, Surat.
43. Seva Prakalp, Rajkot.
44. Saraswati Sheti Vidyalay and Chatravas, Pall, Sabarkantha.
45. Chatravas, Chikisalaya, Vidyalay, Balwadi, Sidumbar , Valsad.

MADHYA PRADESH

46. Seva Bharati Seva Kendra, Bhopal
47. Seva Bharati, Seva Kendra, Indore.
48. Sri Anand Hindu Anandashram, Pimpalkheda, Dhar.
49. Chiwakut Gramoday Vishva Vidyalay, Chitrakut, Sataa.
50. Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, Moolasthan, Jaipur.
51. Bharatiya Kusbia Nivaran Kendra, Sontji, Champa.

MAHARASHTRA.

52. Vanavasi Kanya Chatravas, Dhantoli, Nagpur
53. Dr. Hedgewar Rakta Pedhi, Nagpur.

54. Pt. Deen Dayal Swasthya Yajana, Nagpur.
55. Vaidyakeeya Chikitsa Kendra Medical Mission, Chikhajdara, Amravati.
56. Dr. Hedgewar Hospital, Aurdngabad.
57. Sondara Gumkul Dongri, Beed. .
58. Earthquake Affected Rehabilitation Centre, Rebe Chincholi, Usmanabad.
59. Swami Vivekananda Vaidyakeeya Pratisthan and Research Centre, Latur.
60. Ekalavya Vanavasi Vikas Vasati Griha, Yamgarwadi, Usmanabad.
61. Vanavasi Kanya Chatralay, Harsul, Nashik.
62. Swaroopvardna Pune-
63. Janakalyan Raktapedbi, Pune
64. Udyog Dham Rehabilitation of Leprosy Affected, Tategaon, Pune.
65. Ekatnik Grameen Arogya Prakalp, Warsa, Dhule.
66. Vanavasi Kanya Chatralay, Talasari, Thane.
67. Dr. Hedgewar Seva Prakalp, Mangaon, Sindhudurg.

NORTH-EAST

68. Bhaskar Vidyapeeth, Parvatipur, Assam.
69. Sadgiri Memorial Dispensary, Laikor, Meghalaya.
70. Reng Bang Home Sevashram and Shishu Niketan Phulni, Assam.
71. Chatravas and Vidyalay, Difu, Assam.
72. Ziliangsung Heraka School and Chatravas, Tening Nagaland.
73. Kalyan Ashram Chatravas and Vidya Bharat Vidyalaya, Kakching, Tripura
74. Ratanmani Seva Mission Vidyalaya and Chatravas Dhumachada, Tripura.
75. Mehta Chatravas and Vidya Bharati Vidyalay Halflong, Assam.

[Source: Amrut-Kumbha of Service Streams, Ekta Prakashan , Pune]

Appendix VI
National Agenda for Governance

The following is the text of the National Agenda for Governance the leaders of the BJP and its allies released on 18 March 1998, a day prior to the swearing in of the Atal Behari Vajpayee government. The signatories to the document were: A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, J.Jayalalitha, S.S. Barnala, Bansi Lal, Naveen Patnaik, George Fernandes, Mamata Banerjee, Ajit Panja, Ramakrishna Hegde, M. Sarpotdar, Ramadoss, Vazhapadi K. Ramamurthy, Vaiko, Subramaniam Swami, M.M. Joshi and Jaswant Sinha.

PREAMBLE

In the recently concluded elections to the twelfth Lok Sabha, the BJP and its alliance partners went to the people as a team and sought their support for forming a new government. The electorate has given its verdict. The BJP and alliance partners have unitedly won. We have the mandate to govern. This we will do mindful of the high responsibility and honour that has been conferred upon US.

On this occasion we recollect the core of the appeal for support that we had made: the assurance of a 'stable government and an able leadership'. As a reaffirmation of that, and in joint and unanimous commitment to this high national endeavour, together the BJP and alliance partners now present to the country a 'National Agenda for Governance'.

This is our joint commitment, an assurance that we give together to the entire country. We do so conscious of the deep historic import of the moment in this the Golden jubilee year of our independence; of the great relevance and signification of 'The Agenda for India', adopted unanimously by both Houses of Parliament on that occasion; the impending end of the Twentieth Century and the dawning of a new millennium. On this occasion we appeal for an aspiration to the advent of a new political age of reconciliation and accord; of dynamic economic growth with our cherished values of humanism in the forefront, and above all with unshakable faith in the destiny of our great land and its people.

Governance

Our first commitment to the people is to give a stable, honest, transparent and efficient government capable of accomplishing all-round development. For this the government shall introduce time-bound programmes of needed administrative reforms including those of the police and other Civil Services.

Economy

We will continue with the reform process, give it a strong *Swadeshi* thrust to ensure that the national economy grows on the principle that 'India shall be built by Indians'; reappraise and revitalize reforms through giving primacy to removal of unemployment, and to an accelerated development of infrastructure, particularly energy and power production. We will bring GDP growth to the 7-8 per cent bracket, and control deficits fiscal and revenue. We will take all such steps as would expedite implementation of policies and programmes in accord with our national interests; and give to the entire national development efforts a humane face with total eradication of poverty as the ultimate goal. For this *'Berozgari Hatao* -eradicate unemployment is our call.

3. We will carefully analyse the effects of globalization, calibrate the process of it by devising a timetable to suit our national conditions and requirements so as to not undermine but strengthen the national economy, the indigenous industrial base and the financial and services sectors.

4. We will earmark 60 per cent of the Plan Funds for and effect public investment in agriculture, rural development, irrigation and by diverse incentives, including tax shelters, achieve a quantum leap in agricultural production so that agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food processing, fisheries and so on become the vehicles for the growth resulting in an enhancement of the purchasing power of the people. Effective crop insurance schemes will be introduced. Special efforts will be made in Animal Husbandry, Dairying, particularly in respect of Cow and its progeny. This is one of the routes to generating employment, thus eradicating hunger and poverty in rural as well as urban areas. We will continue with farm subsidies but make them more direct, efficient and specific. Development of medium and small-scale irrigation projects shall receive priority attention; emphasis for investment here will be in accordance with the potential for development.

5. We will adopt a National Water Policy, which provides for effective and prompt settlement of disputes and their time bound implementation.

We will increase the national savings to 30 per cent of the GDP in the next five years by appropriate incentives a through motivation; encourage Foreign Direct Investment, in core areas so that it usefully supplements the national efforts and discourages FDI in non-priority areas.

We will institute a comprehensive study of the financial technological and social security requirement of the self-employed and unincorporated sector also constitutes a Development Bank to promote this largest segment of the national economy which, too, has great employment and self-employment potential. Further, in addition to financial support institutions we will bring other institutional systems for providing services, technology and marketing facilities for artisans, the small-scale, village, Khadi, powerloom, handloom, handicrafts and such other industries. This and the Agriculture sectors are an untapped source with unlimited scope for generation of employment.

8. We will give a major thrust to infrastructure development, particularly energy and-power, by recommencing public expenditure in the sector. Towards this we will access long term funds in the national and international markets, remove administrative bottlenecks, reverse the slowdown in this critical area of national economy, thus giving a fresh impetus to growth.

9. We will undertake a review of all laws and regulations relating to industry so as to free it from bureaucratic control; institute a system of voluntary

compliance with laws- including tax laws; ensure speedy redressal of industrial sickness; arrange for meaningful interaction between industry and government, and revive the capital market as a viable and transparent mechanism for raising capital. We will also expedite comprehensive reform of the PSUS, including restructuring, rehabilitation and divestment.

Labour

10. We will make labour, both organized and unorganized, an equal and proud partner in the production of the nation's wealth and in its progress. Laws relating to equal pay for equal work for men and women shall be strictly implemented.

Eradication of Unemployment

11. Recognizing the righf to work of every citizen, the main thrust of the new government will be' Berozgari *Hatao'* (Eradicate Unemployment). As against the present trend towards jobless growth, our government will measure growth by generation of gainful employment. Our new investment and institutional thrusts to agriculture, the self-employed, the unincorporated sector, infrastructure development and housing act as the vehicles for massive employment creation at all levels.

Food Security and Price Stability

12. We will ensure food security for all, create a hunger-free India in the next five years and reform and improve the Public Distribution System so as to serve the poorest of the poor in rural and urban areas. We will also ensure price stability by all appropriate means and necessary legislation.

Health and Drinking Water

13. We will ensure that potable drinking water is available to all villages in the next five years. We will strive to achieve 'Health for All' by diverse programmes.

Education for All

14. We are committed to total eradication of illiteracy. We will formulate and implement plans to gradually increase governmental and non-governmental spending on up to six per cent of the GDP to provide education for all. We will implement the constitutional provision of primary education free and compulsory up to fifth standard. Our aim is to move towards equal access to and opportunity of educational standards up to the school-leaving stage. We shall strive to improve the quality of education at from primary schools to our universities.

Housing for All

15. Shelter is a basic human requirement that needs on a priority basis. We are, therefore, committed a National Housing and Habitat Policy in consul State Governments, aimed at providing Housing for all. Towards this end, we shall facilitate construction of 20 lakh additional housing units annually. As in other programmes, the emphasis will be on benefit to the poor and the deprived.

Empowerment of Women

16. We will legislate for the reservation of 33 per cent seats in Parliament and State Assemblies for women; also institute plans for providing free education for girls up to college level, including professional courses, so as to empower women. We will also set up a Development Bank for women entrepreneurs in the small scale and tiny sectors.

Harnessing Yuva Shakti

17. Our youth are the strength of the family, village, locality and the community, they are also the future of our nation. We will take all necessary steps to mobilize this most idealistic and inspired and energetic section of our society in the mission of nation building. For this purpose, we shall build consensus for the creation of a National Reconstruction Corps aimed at environmental protection, ecological tasks, reclamation of wasteland, including afforestation, and for spreading literacy. We will have a time-bound programme for promotion of sports.

Children

18. We will present a National Charter for Children, our aim is to ensure that no child remains illiterate, hungry, or lacks medical care. We will take measures to eliminate child labour.

Population

19. A suitable and judicious mix of incentives and disincentives for population control shall be presented early so that national commitment on this critical issue is obtained.

Constitutional and Legal Reforms

20. We will appoint a Commission to review the Constitution of India in the light of the experience of the past 50 years and to make suitable recommendations.

We are convinced that there is a clear case for devolution of more financial and administrative powers and functions to the States. We will take suitable steps to ensure harmonious Centre-State relations in the light of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission and also effect decentralization right up to the grassroots level by activating and involving Panchayats and local bodies. States of the Union where the percentage of population below the poverty line has increased during the last five decades shall receive special attention. A Backward Area Commission for each State of the Union to identify least developed areas and recommend comprehensive measures for their development shall be instituted. A Committee will be set up to study the feasibility of treating all languages included in Schedule 8 of the Constitution as official languages.

22. We will introduce necessary electoral reforms on the basis of the recommendations of the Goswami Committee so as to deal with the malaise of defections, corruption and criminalization of politics, and to prevent electoral malpractices.

We will set up a National Judicial Commission which will recommend judicial appointments in High Courts and the Supreme Court and draw up a code of ethics for the Judiciary.

Corruption

24. We will enact the Lok Pal Bill with adequate powers to deal with corruption charges against anyone, including Prime Minister. In the administration of justice, we shall not allow discrimination between the rich and the poor, the empowered and the powerless; restore the majesty of law, the objectivity of the state.

New State

25. We will give full Statehood to Delhi and also create Uttaranchal, Vananchal and Chhattisgarh as new states.

National Security

26. The state of preparedness, morale and combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces shall receive early attention and appropriate remedial action. We will establish a Nation Security Council to analyse the military, economic and political threats to the nation, also to continuously advise the government. This Council will undertake India's first ever Strategic Defence Review. To ensure the security, territorial integrity of India we will take all necessary steps and exercise all available options. Towards that end we will re-evaluate policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons.

Internal Security

27. We are committed to ensuring the safety and security of all citizens in all parts of the country. For reaching we will take effective steps to create a riot-free order and a terrorism-free India.

International Relations

We will strive to secure for India a place, role and position in the global arena, consistent with our size and capability and promote peaceful relationship with all neighbours on a reciprocal basis. We will promote and strengthen regional and civilizational groupings on the lines of SAARC and ASEAN, and reorient our diplomacy to pursue our economic and commercial gains. We will formulate our agenda on the WTO issues in the wider perspective of the universal goal of creating a world order which is more equitable, humane and free of exploitation. To this end, we will attempt to build a system of trade and economic cooperation through an expanded global system of trade preferences (GSTP) among developing countries. In the WTO we will assert more robustly India's national interest.

Genuine Secularism

We are committed to establishing a civilized, humane and just civil order; that which does not discriminate on grounds of caste, religion, class, colour, race or sex. We will truly and genuinely uphold and practice the concept of secular-

ism consistent with the Indian tradition *of Sarva panth samadara'* (equal respect for all faiths) and on the basis of equality of all. We are committed to the economic and educational development of the minorities and will take effective steps in this regard.

SCs, STs and Backward Classes

30. The interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes will be adequately safeguarded by appropriate legal, executive and societal efforts and by large-scale education and empowerment. We will provide legal protection to existing percentages of reservation in educational institutions at the State level. We will continue to offer all assistance to the SCs, STs and Backward Classes to ensure their speedy socioeconomic development. We will remove the last vestiges of untouchability from our society. Further, we will present a National Charter for Social justice (*Samajik Nyay)* based on the principle of social harmony (*Samajik Samarasata).*

Environment

31. We will establish an appropriate legal framework for the protection of the environment and unveil Environment Policy to balance between development ecology.

Prasar Bharati

32. We will improve the Prasar Bharati Act as origin (before its amendment by ordinances) to make it an effective instrument accountable to Parliament. We will also enact the Broadcasting Bill to regulate private broadcasting and to protect Indian interests. We will restrict foreign equity holding in private television broadcasting to 2o per cent and prevent cross holding to avoid emergence of in the media.

Science and Technology

33. For sustainable national development and the long-overdue transformation of India into a modern, prosperous and knowledge-driven nation, we will ensure integration of efforts in the field of science and technology with development programmes in various socioeconomic sectors. We will speed up the modernization of National Laboratories, R&D and establish Centres of Excellence.

Information Technology

34. A new revolution is sweeping globe-that of Information Technology. We believe that Information Technology is an important vehicle for future development. We are committed to ensuring that India is a full and equal partner in its global progress; indeed, that India can be a software superpower. We will, for that purpose, unveil a National Informatics Policy with short- medium- and long-term perspectives

A New Norm for Government by Consensus

35. Finally, we are convinced that a nation of nearly people representing a sixth of humanity cannot be governed on the arithmetics alone of majority and

minority. Governance must become unifying, not divisive, in its practice. It is this mindless manner of the domination of the majority that has led to bitterness hostility and confrontation-and has even made the Opposition and ruling parties like permanent adversaries. This body politic in the last few decades calls for an immediate corrective. We will, therefore, strive to develop national consensus on all major issues confronting the nation by involving the Opposition parties and all sections of society in dialogue. We will also try for a consensual mode of governance as far as practicable.

Conclusion

This National Agenda is a sincere and solemn covenant aimed at changing the content and culture of governance of this great nation, freeing it of the triple curses of hunger *(bhookh), fear (bhay)* and corruption *(bhrashtachar),* and transforming it into a New India that is prosperous, strong, self-confident and at peace with itself and the world. We appeal for the cooperation of all parties and all sections of society in this great endeavour.

The Emerging *Hindutva* Force

The Ascent of Hindu Nationalism

PRAKASH LOUIS

The demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya and the communal riots that followed after that, the increase in the atrocities on the minorities, the coming to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the attempt to review the Constitution etc are considered as the real threat to the Indian nation and society. This book goes much further and deeper and attempts to trace the development of the brahminical Communal Nationalism under the guise of Hindu Nationalism. Prakash Louis endeavors to identify the real agenda, the real face and force behind the nomenclature Hindutva. He clearly and categorically points out that the saffron wave is not a phenomenon of the 1980s but its origin could be traced to 1930s that is even before the attainment of Independence. Prakash Louis judiciously highlights the fact that in a period of societal and national crisis, the Sangh Parivar has projected itself to be the defender of the nation and the society. He locates the ascent of the brahminical communal nationalism in the broader socio-cultural, political and economic crisis that is engulfing the state and the society. He argues forcefully that in the final analysis it is the attempt by the brahminical communal forces to maintain their hegemony and monopoly over the citizens of this ancient country especially over the Dalits, Tribals, women and the most backward castes.

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